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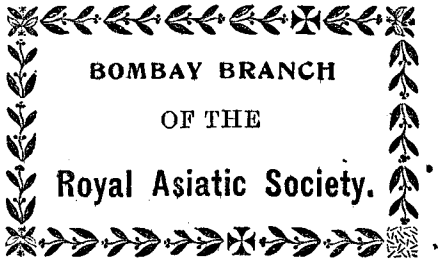

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THE

LIFE AND POETICAL WORKS

OF THE

REV.D GEORGE CRABBE,

Edited by his Son.

IN ONE VOLUME.

C.R. Leslie, R.A. pinx.t — Shaw, sculp.t

Abel Keene

See page 243

LONDON.
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1860.

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THE LIFE

AND

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REV. GEORGE CRABBE.

BY HIS SON.

A NEW AND COMPLETE EDITION,

WITH PORTRAIT AND ENGRAVINGS.

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1861.

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PREFACE TO THE LIFE

The success of some recent biographical works, evidently written by unpractised hands, suggested to me the possibility that my recollections of my father might be received with favour by the public. The rough draft of the following narrative was accordingly drawn up, and submitted to my father's friend, Mr. Thomas Moore, whom at that time I had never seen, and who, in returning it, was so kind as to assure me that he had read it with much interest, and conceived that, with a little correction, it might gratify the readers of Mr. Crabbe's Poetical Works. I afterwards transmitted it to his friend Mr. Rogers, who expressed himself in terms equally flattering to an inexperienced writer; and who—as indeed, Mr. Moore had done before—gave me the most valuable species of assistance I could have received, by indicating certain passages that ought to be obliterated. Mr. Moore, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Lockhart, Mrs. Joanna Baillie, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Clark, and others of my father's friends, have, moreover, taken the trouble to draw up brief summaries of their personal reminiscences of him, with which I have been kindly permitted to enrich this humble Memoir.

The letters and extracts of letters from Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Roger Wilbraham, Mr. Canning, Mrs. Leadbeater, and other eminent friends of Mr. Crabbe, now deceased, which are introduced in the following pages, have been so used with the permission of their representatives; and I have to thank the Duke of Rutland, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Earl Grey, Lord Holland, the Right Hon. J. W. Croker, the Rev. Richard Turner, and the other living gentlemen, whose correspondence has been as serviceable to my labours as it was honourable to my father's character, for leave to avail myself of these valuable materials.

I cannot conclude, without expressing my sense of the important assistance which has been rendered to me, in finally correcting my work and arranging it for the press, by a friend high in the scale of literary distinction; who, however, does not permit me to mention his name on this occasion. On the assistance I have received from my brother, and another member of my own family, it would be impertinent to dwell.

Pucklechurch, January 6, 1834.

LIFE

OF THE

REV. GEORGE CRABBE.

CHAPTER I.

1754—1775.

Mr. Crabbe's Birth, Parentage, and Early Education—His Apprenticeship to a Surgeon—His Attachment to Miss Elmy, afterwards his Wife—Publication of "Inebriety," a Poem.

As one of the severest calamities of life, the loss of our first and dearest friends, can be escaped by none whose own days are not prematurely cut short, the most pious affection must be contented to pray that the affliction may come on us gradually, and after we have formed new connections to sustain us, and, in part at least, fill up the void. In this view, the present writer has every reason to consider with humble thankfulness the period and circumstances of his father's departure. The growing decline of his bodily strength had been perceptible to all around him for several years. He himself had long set the example of looking forward with calmness to the hour of his dissolution; and if the firmness and resignation of a Christian's death-bed must doubly endear his memory to his children, they also afford indescribable consolation after the scene is closed. At an earlier period, Mr. Crabbe's death would have plunged his family in insupportable suffering: but when the blow fell, it had many alleviations.

With every softening circumstance, however, a considerable interval must pass, before the sons of such a parent can bear to dwell on the minor peculiarities of his image and character;—a much longer one, ere they can bring themselves to converse on light and ludicrous incidents connected with his memory. The tone of some passages in the ensuing narrative may appear at variance with these feelings; and it is therefore necessary for me to state here, that the design of drawing up some memoirs of my father's life, from his own fireside anecdotes, had occurred to me several years ago, and that a great part of what I now lay before the public had been committed to writing more than a twelvemonth before his decease. At the time when I was thus occupied, although his health was evidently decaying, there was nothing to forbid the hope that he might linger for years among us, in the enjoyment of such comforts as can smooth the gradual descent of old age to the tomb; and I pleased myself with the fond anticipation, that when I should have completed my manuscript, he himself might be its first critic, and take the trouble to correct it wherever I had fallen into any mistakes of importance. But he was at last carried off by a violent illness, of short duration—and thus ended for ever the most pleasing dream of my authorship.

I mention these things to caution the reader against construing into unfilial levity certain passages of this little work: but, at the same time, I feel that Mr. Crabbe himself would have wished his son, if he attempted to write his life at all, to do so, as far as might be possible, with the unbiassed fairness of one less intimately connected with him. To impartiality, certainly, I cannot pretend; but I hope partiality does not necessarily imply misrepresentation. I shall endeavour to speak of him as his manly and honest mind would have wished me to do. I shall place before the reader, not only his nobler qualities, but the weaknesses and infirmities which mingled with them—and of which he was more conscious than of the elevation of his genius. To trick out an ideal character for the public eye, by either the omission or the exaggeration of really characteristic traits, is an office which my respect for my father—even if there were nothing else—would render it impossible for me to attempt. I am sustained by the belief that his countrymen at large respect his memory too much to wish that his history should be turned into anything like a romance, and the hope that they will receive with indulgence a faithful narrative, even though it should be a homely one.

I have in vain endeavoured to trace his descent beyond his grandfather. Various branches of the name appear to have been settled, from a remote period, in Norfolk, and in different seafaring places on the coast of Suffolk; and it

seems probable that the first who assumed it was a fisherman.[1] A pilot, by name Crabbe, of Walton, was consulted as a man of remarkable experience, about the voyage of Edward the Third, previous to the battle of Cressy. The Crabbes of Norfolk have been, for many generations, in the station of farmers, or wealthy yeomen; and I doubt whether any of the race had ever risen much above this sphere of life; for though there is now in the possession of my uncle at Southwold an apparently ancient coat of arms, — *gules*, three crab-fish, *or*, — how or whence it came into the hands of his father we have no trace, and therefore I cannot attach much weight to such a shadowy token of *gentle* pretensions.

George Crabbe, the Poet's grandfather, was a burgess of Aldborough, who became, in his latter days, collector of the customs in that port, but must have died in narrow circumstances; since his son, named also *George*, and originally educated for trade, appears to have been, very early in life, the keeper of a parochial school in the porch of the church of Orford. From this place he removed to Norton, near Loddon, in Norfolk, where he united the humble offices of schoolmaster and parish clerk. He at length returned to Aldborough, where, after acting for many years as warehouse-keeper and deputy collector, he rose to be collector of the salt-duties, or Salt-master. He was a man of strong and vigorous talents, skilful in business of all sorts, distinguished in particular for an extraordinary faculty of calculation; and during many years of his life was the *factotum*, as the Poet expressed it, of Aldborough. Soon after his final settlement in his native town, he married a widow of the name of Loddock, a woman of the most amiable disposition, mild, patient, affectionate, and deeply religious in her turn of mind; and by her he had six children, all of whom, except one girl, lived to mature years.

George Crabbe, the Poet, was the eldest of the family; and was born at Aldborough, on the Christmas-eve of 1754.[2] His next brother, Robert, was bred to the business of a glazier, and is now living in retirement at Southwold. John Crabbe, the third son, served for some time in the royal navy, and became subsequently the captain of a Liverpool slave-ship. Returning from a successful voyage, he married the owner's daughter; and on his next excursion, he perished by an insurrection of the slaves. The negroes, having mastered the crew, set the whole of them adrift in an open boat; and neither Captain Crabbe nor any of his companions were ever again heard of. The fourth brother, William, also took to a seafaring life. Being made prisoner by the Spaniards, he was carried to Mexico, where he became a silversmith, married, and prospered, until his increasing riches attracted a charge of Protestantism; the consequence of which was much persecution. He at last was obliged to abandon Mexico, his property, and his family; and was discovered, in the year 1803, by an Aldborough sailor, on the coast of Honduras, where again he seems to have found some success in business. This sailor was the only person he had seen for many a year who could tell him anything of Aldborough and his family: and great was his perplexity when he was informed, that his eldest brother, George, was a clergyman—the sailor, I dare say, had never himself heard of his being a poet. "This cannot be *our* George," said the wanderer—"he was a *doctor!*" This was the first, and it was also the last, tidings that ever reached my father of his brother William; and, upon the Aldborough sailor's story of his casual interview, it is obvious that the poet built his tale of "The Parting Hour," whose hero, Allen Booth, "yielded to the Spanish force," and—

> " no more
> Return'd exulting to his native shore."

Like William Crabbe,

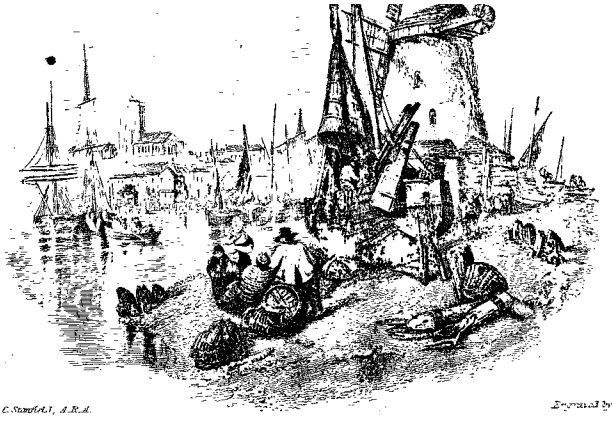
> "There, hopeless ever to escape the land,
> *He* to a Spanish maiden gave his hand:
> In cottage shelter'd from the blaze of day
> He saw his happy infants round him play,—
> Where summer shadows, made by lofty trees,
> Waved o'er his seat, and soothed his reveries."

But—

> "'Whilst I was poor,' said Allen, 'none would care
> What my poor notions of religion were;
> I preach'd no foreign doctrine to my wife,
> And never mention'd Luther in my life;
> Their forms I follow'd, whether well or sick,
> And was a most obedient Catholick.
> But I had money—and these pastors found
> My notions vague, heretical, unsound.'
>
> "Alas, poor Allen! through his wealth were seen
> Crimes that by poverty conceal'd had been:
> Faults that in dusty pictures rest unknown,
> Are in an instant through the varnish shown.
> They spared his forfeit life, but bade him fly;
> Or for his crime and contumacy die.
> Fly from all scenes, all objects of delight;
> His wife, his children, weeping in his sight,
> All urging him to flee—he fled, and cursed his flight.
> He next related how he found a way,
> Guideless and grieving, to Campeachy Bay:
> There, in the woods, he wrought, and there among
> Some labouring seamen heard his native tongue:

[1] "I cannot account for the vanity of that one of my ancestors who first (being dissatisfied with the four letters which composed the name of 'Crab,' the sour fruit, or 'Crab,' the crusty fish) added his *be* by way of disguise. Alas! he gained nothing worth his trouble; but he has brought upon me, his descendant after I know not how many generations, a question beyond my abilities to answer."—*Mr. Crabbe to Mr. Chantrey, Dec.* 11, 1822.

[2] When my grandfather first settled in Aldborough, he lived in an old house in that range of buildings which the sea has now almost demolished. The chambers projected far over the ground-floor; and the windows were small, with diamond panes, almost impervious to the light. In this gloomy dwelling the Poet was born. The house of which Mr. Bernard Barton has published a print as "the birth-place of Crabbe" was inhabited by the family during my father's boyhood. A view of it, by Stanfield, forms the vignette to this volume.



Drawn by C. Stanfield, A.R.A. Engraved by E. F[illegible]

ALDBOROUGH.

SUFFOLK.

The Birth place of Crabbe.

Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1860.

Again he heard—he seized an offer'd hand—
'And when beheld you last our native land?'
He cried; 'and in what country? quickly say.'
The seamen answer'd—strangers all were they—
One only at his native port had been;
He landing once the quay and *church* had seen." &c.

The youngest of this family, Mary, became the wife of Mr. Sparkes, a builder in her native town, where she died in 1827. Another sister, as has been mentioned, died in infancy; and I find among my father's papers the following lines, referring to the feelings with which, in the darkening evening of life, he still recurred to that early distress:—

"But it was misery stung me in the day
Death of an infant sister made his prey;
For then first met and moved my early fears
A father's terrors and a mother's tears.
Though greater anguish I have since endured,
Some heal'd in part, some never to be cured,
Yet was there something in that first-born ill
So new, so strange, that memory feels it still." MS.

The second of these couplets has sad truth in every word. The fears of the future poet were as real as the tears of his mother, and the "terrors" of his father. The Salt-master was a man of imperious temper and violent passions; but the darker traits of his character had, at this period, showed themselves only at rare intervals, and on extraordinary occasions. He had been hitherto, on the whole, an exemplary husband and father; and was passionately devoted to the little girl, whose untimely death drew from him those gloomy and savage tokens of misery which haunted, fifty years after, the memory of his gentler son. He was a man of short stature, but very robust and powerful; and he had a highly marked countenance, not unlike in lineaments, as my father used to say, to that of Howard the philanthropist; but stamped with the trace of passions which that illustrious man either knew not or had subdued.

Aldborough (or, as it is more correctly written, Aldeburgh) was in those days a poor and wretched place, with nothing of the elegance and gaiety which have since sprung up about it, in consequence of the resort of watering parties. The town lies between a low hill or cliff, on which only the old church and a few better houses were then situated, and the beach of the German Ocean. It consisted of two parallel and unpaved streets, running between mean and scrambling houses, the abodes of seafaring men, pilots, and fishers. The range of houses nearest to the sea had suffered so much from repeated invasions of the waves, that only a few scattered tenements appeared erect among the desolation.[3]

[3] "From an accurate plan of the borough, which was taken in 1559, it appears that the church was then more than ten times its present distance from the shore; and also that there were Denes of some extent, similar to those at Yarmouth, between the town and the sea, which have long been swallowed up and lost. After very high tides, the remains of wells have been frequently discovered below high-water mark."—*Aldborough Described, by the Rev. James Ford*, p. 4.

I have often heard my father describe a tremendous spring-tide of, I think, the 1st of January, 1779, when eleven houses here were at once demolished; and he saw the breakers dash over the roofs, curl round the walls, and crush all to ruin. The beach consists of successive ridges—large rolled stones, then loose shingle, and, at the fall of the tide, a stripe of fine hard sand. Vessels of all sorts, from the large heavy trol-boat to the yawl and prame, drawn up along the shore—fishermen preparing their tackle, or sorting their spoil—and nearer the gloomy old town-hall (the only indication of municipal dignity) a few groups of mariners, chiefly pilots, taking their quick short walk backwards and forwards, every eye watchful of a signal from the offing—such was the squalid scene that first opened on the author of "The Village."

Nor was the landscape in the vicinity of a more engaging aspect—open commons and sterile farms, the soil poor and sandy, the herbage bare and rushy, the trees "few and far between," and withered and stunted by the bleak breezes of the sea. The opening picture of "The Village" was copied, in every touch, from the scene of the Poet's nativity and boyish days:—

"Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye;
There thistles spread their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infants threaten war."

The "broad river," called the Ald, approaches the sea close to Aldborough, within a few hundred yards, and then turning abruptly continues to run for about ten miles parallel to the beach,—from which, for the most part, a dreary stripe of marsh and waste alone divides it,—until it at length finds its embouchure at Orford. The scenery of this river has been celebrated as lovely and delightful, in a poem called "Slaughden Vale," written by Mr. James Bird, a friend of my father's; and old Camden talks of "the beautiful vale of Slaughden." I confess, however, that though I have ever found an indescribable charm in the very weeds of the place, I never could perceive its claims to beauty. Such as it is, it has furnished Mr. Crabbe with many of his happiest and most graphical descriptions: and the same may be said of the whole line of coast from Orford to Dunwich, every feature of which has somewhere or other been reproduced in his writings. The quay of Slaughden, in particular, has been painted with all the minuteness of a Dutch landscape:—

"Here samphire banks and saltwort bound the flood,
There stakes and sea-weeds withering on the mud;
And higher up a ridge of all things base,
Which some strong tide has roll'd upon the place. . . .

Yon is our quay! those smaller boys from town
Its various wares for country use bring down." &c. &c.

The powerful effect with which Mr. Crabbe has depicted the ocean itself, both in its calm and its tempestuous aspects, may lead many to infer that, had he been born and educated in a region of mountains and forests, he might have represented them also as happily as he has done the slimy marshes and withered commons of the coast of Suffolk: but it is certain that he visited, and even resided in, some of the finest parts of our island in after-life, without appearing to take much delight in the grander features of inland scenery; and it may be doubted whether, under any circumstances, his mind would ever have found much of the excitement of delight elsewhere than in the study of human beings. And certainly, for one destined to distinction as a portrayer of character, few scenes could have been more favourable than that of his infancy and boyhood. He was cradled among the rough sons of the ocean,—a daily witness of unbridled passions, and of manners remote from the sameness and artificial smoothness of polished society. At home, as has already been hinted, he was subject to the caprices of a stern and imperious, though not unkindly nature; and, probably, few whom he could familiarly approach but had passed through some of those dark domestic tragedies in which his future strength was to be exhibited. The common people of Aldborough in those days are described as—

——"a wild, amphibious race,
With sullen woe display'd in every face;
Who far from civil arts and social fly,
And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye."

Nor, although the family in which he was born happened to be somewhat above the mass in point of situation, was the remove so great as to be marked with any considerable difference in point of refinement. Masculine and robust frames, rude manners, stormy passions, laborious days, and, occasionally, boisterous nights of merriment,—among such accompaniments was born and reared the Poet of the Poor.

His father, at this early period, was still, as I have already noticed, on the whole, domestic in his habits; and he used occasionally to read aloud to his family, in the evenings, passages from Milton, Young, or some other of our graver classics, with, as his son thought long afterwards, remarkable judgment, and with powerful effect: but his chosen intellectual pursuit was mathematical calculation. He mingled with these tastes not a little of the seafaring habits and propensities of the place. He possessed a share in a fishing-boat, in which he not unfrequently went to sea; and he had also a small sailing-boat, in which he delighted to navigate the river.

The first event which was deeply impressed on my father's memory was a voyage in this vessel. A party of amateur sailors was formed —the yacht-club of Aldborough—to try the new purchase; a jovial dinner prepared at Orford, and a merry return anticipated at night; and his fond mother obtained permission for George to be one of the company. Soon after sunrise, in a fine summer morning, they were seated in their respective vessels, and started in gallant trim, tacking and manœuvring on the bosom of the flickering water, as it winds gently towards its junction with the sea. The freshness of the early dawn, the anticipation of amusements at an unknown place, and no little exultation in his father's *crack* vessel, "made it," he said, "a morning of exquisite delight;" and, among the MSS. which he left, are the following verses on this early incident:—

"Sweet was the morning's breath, the inland tide,
And our boat gliding, where alone could glide
Small craft—and they oft touch'd on either side.
It was my first-born joy—I heard them say
'Let the child go; he will enjoy the day;
For children ever feel delighted when
They take their portion and enjoy with men.
The linnet chirped upon the furze as well,
To my young sense, as sings the nightingale.
Without was Paradise—because within
Was a keen relish, without taint of sin."

But it appears that, as in other sublunary pleasures, the best part of this day's sport was the anticipation of the morning; for he adds,—

"As the sun declined,
The good found early I no more could find.
The men drank much to whet the appetite,
And, growing heavy, drank to make them light;
Then drank to relish joy, then further to excite.
The lads play'd idly with the helm and oar,
And nervous women would be set on shore,
And 'civil dudgeon' grew, and peace would smile no more,
Till on the colder water faintly shone
The sloping light—the cheerful day was gone.
In life's advance, events like this I knew,—
So they advanced, and so they ended too.
The promised joy, that like this morning rose,
Broke on the view—then clouded at its close." MS.

Though born and brought up almost within the washing of the surge, the future Poet had but few qualifications for a sailor. The Salt-master often took his boys a-fishing with him; and sorely was his patience tried with the awkwardness of the eldest. "That boy," he would say, "must be a *fool*. John, and Bob, and Will, are all of some use about a boat; but what will that *thing* ever be good for?" This, however, was only the passion of the moment; for Mr. Crabbe perceived early the natural talents of his eldest son, and, as that son ever gratefully remembered, was at more expense with his education than his worldly circumstances could well afford.

My father was, indeed, in a great measure, self-educated. After he could read at all—and

he was a great favourite with the old dame who taught him—he was unwearied in reading; and he devoured without restraint whatever came into his hands, but especially works of fiction—those little stories and ballads about ghosts, witches, and fairies, which were then almost exclusively the literature of youth, and which, whatever else might be thought of them, served, no doubt, to strike out the first sparks of imagination in the mind of many a youthful poet. Mr. Crabbe retained, to the close of life, a strong partiality for marvellous tales of even this humble class. In verse he delighted, from the earliest time that he could read. His father took in a periodical work, called "Martin's Philosophical Magazine," which contained, at the end of each number, a sheet of "occasional poetry." The Salt-master irreverently cut out these sheets when he sent his magazines to be bound up at the end of the year; and the "Poet's Corner" became the property of George, who read its contents until he had most of them by heart. The boy ere long tried to imitate the pieces which he thus studied; and one of which, he used to say, particularly struck his childish fancy by this terrible concluding couplet,—

> "The boat went down in flames of fire,
> Which made the people all admire."

Mild, obliging, and the most patient of listeners, he was a great favourite with the old dames of the place. Like his own "Richard," many a friendly

> "matron woo'd him, quickly won,
> To fill the station of an absent son."

He admired the rude prints on their walls, rummaged their shelves for books or ballads, and read aloud to those whose eyes had failed them, by the winter evening's fire-side. Walking one day in the street, he chanced to displease a stout lad, who doubled his fist to beat him; but another boy interfered to claim benefit of clergy for the studious George. "You must not meddle with *him*," he said; "let *him* alone, for he ha' got l'arning."

His father observed this bookish turn, and though he had then no higher view for him in life than that he should follow his own example, and be employed in some inferior department of the revenue service, he resolved to give George the advantage of passing some time in a school at Bungay, on the borders of Norfolk, where it was hoped the activity of his mind would be disciplined into orderly diligence. I cannot say how soon this removal from the paternal roof took place; but it must have been very early, as the following anecdote will show:—The first night he spent at Bungay he retired to bed, he said, "with a heavy heart, thinking of his fond, indulgent mother." But the morning brought a new misery. The slender and delicate child had hitherto been dressed by his mother. Seeing the other boys begin to dress themselves, poor George, in great confusion, whispered to his bedfellow, "Master G———, can you put on your shirt?—for—for I 'm afraid I cannot."

Soon after his arrival he had a very narrow escape. He and several of his schoolfellows were punished for playing at soldiers, by being put into a large dog-kennel, known by the terrible name of "the black hole." George was the first that entered: and, the place being crammed full with offenders, the atmosphere soon became pestilentially close. The poor boy in vain shrieked that he was about to be suffocated. At last, in despair, he bit the lad next to him violently in the hand. "Crabbe is dying—Crabbe is dying," roared the sufferer; and the sentinel at length opened the door, and allowed the boys to rush out into the air. My father said, "A minute more, and I must have died."

I am unable to give any more particulars of his residence at Bungay. When he was in his eleventh or twelfth year, it having now been determined that he should follow the profession of a surgeon, he was removed to a school of somewhat superior character, kept by Mr. Richard Haddon, a skilful mathematician, at Stowmarket, in the same county; and here, inheriting his father's talent and predilection for mathematical science, he made considerable progress in such pursuits. The Salt-master used often to send difficult questions to Mr. Haddon, and, to his great delight, the solution came not unfrequently from his son; and, although Haddon was neither a Porson nor a Parr, his young pupil laid, under his care, the foundations of a fair classical education also. Some girls used to come to the school in the evenings, to learn writing; and the tradition is, that Mr. Crabbe's first essay in verse was a stanza of doggerel, cautioning one of these little damsels against being too much elevated about a new set of blue ribbons to her straw bonnet.

After leaving this school, some time passed before a situation as surgeon's apprentice could be found for him; and, by his own confession, he has painted the manner in which most of this interval was spent, in those beautiful lines of his "Richard," which give, perhaps, as striking a picture of the "inquisitive sympathy" and solitary musings of a youthful poet as can elsewhere be pointed out:—

> "I to the ocean gave
> My mind, and thoughts as restless as the wave.
> Where crowds assembled I was sure to run,
> Hear what was said, and muse on what was done.
> To me the wives of seamen loved to tell
> What storms endanger'd men esteem'd so well;
> No ships were wreck'd upon that fatal beach
> But I could give the luckless tale of each.
> In fact, I lived for many an idle year
> In fond pursuit of agitations dear:

For ever seeking, ever pleased to find
The food I sought, I thought not of its kind.

"I loved to walk where none had walk'd before,
About the rocks that ran along the shore;
Or far beyond the sight of men to stray,
And take my pleasure when I lost my way:
For then 'twas mine to trace the hilly heath,
And all the mossy moor that lies beneath.
Here had I favourite stations, where I stood
And heard the murmurs of the ocean-flood,
With not a sound beside, except when flew
Aloft the lapwing, or the grey curlew . . . .
When I no more my fancy could employ—
I left in haste what I could not enjoy,
And was my gentle mother's welcome boy."

The reader is not to suppose, however, that all his hours were spent in this agreeable manner. His father employed him in the warehouse on the quay of Slaughden, in labours which he abhorred, though he in time became tolerably expert in them; such as piling up butter and cheese. He said long after, that he remembered with regret the fretfulness and indignation wherewith he submitted to these drudgeries, in which the Salt-master himself often shared. At length an advertisement, headed "Apprentice wanted," met his father's eye; and George was offered, and accepted, to fill the vacant station at Wickham-Brook, a small village near Bury St. Edmunds. He left his home and his indulgent mother, under the care of two farmers, who were travelling across the country; with whom he parted within about ten miles of the residence of his future master, and proceeded, with feelings easily imagined in a low-spirited, gentle lad, to seek a strange, perhaps a severe, home. Fatigue also contributed to impart its melancholy; and the reception augmented these feelings to bitterness. Just as he reached the door, his master's daughters, having eyed him for a few moments, burst into a violent fit of laughter, exclaiming, "La! here 's our new 'prentice." He never forgot the deep mortification of that moment; but justice to the ladies compels me to mention, that shortly before that period he had had his head shaved during some illness, and, instead of the ornamental curls that now embellish the shorn, he wore, by his own confession, a very ill-made scratch-wig. This happened when he was in his fourteenth year, in 1768.

Besides the duties of his profession, "our new 'prentice" was often employed in the drudgery of the farm—for his master had more occupations than one—and was made the bedfellow and companion of the ploughboy. How astonished would he have been, when carrying medicines on foot to Cheveley (a village at a considerable distance), could he have foreseen that, in a very few years, he should take his daily station in that same place at a duke's table! One day as he mixed with the herd of lads at the public-house, to see the exhibitions of a conjurer, the magician, having worked many wonders, changed a white ball to black, exclaiming—"*Quique olim albus erat nunc est contrarius albo*—and I suppose none of you can tell me what that means." "Yes, I can," said George. "The d—l you can," replied he of the magic wand, eyeing his garb: "I suppose you picked up *your* Latin in a turnip-field." Not daunted by the laughter that followed, he gave the interpretation, and received from the seer a condescending compliment.

Whether my father complained of the large portion of agricultural tuition he received gratis, I know not; but, not being bound by indenture, he was removed, in the year 1771, to a more eligible situation, and concluded his apprenticeship with a Mr. Page, surgeon at Woodbridge, a market-town seventeen miles from Aldborough. Here he met with companions suitable to his mind and habits, and, although he never was fond of his destined profession, began to apply to it in earnest. I have often heard him speak with pleasure of a small society of young men, who met at an inn on certain evenings of the week to converse, over a frugal supper, on the subjects which they were severally studying. One of this rural club was a surgeon of the name of Levett, with whom he had had some very early acquaintance at Aldborough. This friend was at the time paying his addresses to a Miss Brereton, who afterwards married a Mr. Lewis, and published, under the name of Eugenia de Acton, several novels, which enjoyed a temporary popularity—"Vicissitudes of Genteel Life," "The Microcosm," "A Tale without a Title," &c. &c. Miss Brereton's residence was at Framlingham, and her great friend and companion was Miss Sarah Elmy, then domesticated in the neighbouring village of Parham, under the roof of an uncle, Mr. Tovell. Mr. Levett said carelessly one day, "Why, George, you shall go with me to Parham: there is a young lady there that would just suit you. My father accompanied him accordingly on his next "lover's journey," was introduced to Miss Brereton and her friend, and spent in their society a day which decided his matrimonial lot in life.[4]

He was at this time in his eighteenth year, and had already excited the attention of his companions by his attempts in versification—attempts to which it may be supposed his love now lent a new impulse, and supplied an in-

4 William Springall Levett died in 1774; and the following epitaph, written at the time by Mr. Crabbe, may be worth preserving:—

"What! though no trophies peer above his dust,
Nor sculptured conquests deck his sober bust;
What! though no earthly thunders sound his name,
Death gives him conquest, and our sorrows fame;
One sigh reflection heaves, but shuns excess—
More should we mourn him, did we love him less."

Green's History of Framlingham, p. 163.

exhaustible theme. In an autobiographical sketch, published some years ago to accompany a portrait in the New Monthly Magazine, he says of himself, "He had, with youthful indiscretion, written for publications wherein Damons and Delias begin the correspondence that does not always end there, and where diffidence is nursed till it becomes presumption. There was then a Lady's Magazine, published by Mr. Wheble, in which our young candidate wrote for a prize on the subject of Hope,[5] and he had the misfortune to gain it; in consequence of which he felt himself more elevated above the young men, his companions, who made no verses, than it is to be hoped he has done at any time since, when he has been able to compare and judge with a more moderate degree of self-approbation. He wrote upon every occasion, and without occasion; and, like greater men, and indeed like almost every young versifier, he planned tragedies and epic poems, and began to think of succeeding in the highest line of composition, before he had made one good and commendable effort in the lowest."

In fact, even before he quitted his first master at Wickham-Brook, he had filled a drawer with verses; and I have now a quarto volume before me, consisting chiefly of pieces written at Woodbridge, among which occur "The Judgment of the Muse, in the Metre of Spenser," —"Life, a Poem,"—"An Address to the Muse, in the Manner of Sir Walter Raleigh," —an ode or two, in which he evidently aims at the style of Cowley,—and a profusion of lyrics "To Mira;" the name under which it pleased him to celebrate Sarah Elmy. A parody on Shenstone's "My time, oh ye Muses," opens thus:—

"My days, oh ye lovers, were happily sped,
Ere you or your whimsies got into my head;
I could laugh, I could sing, I could trifle and jest,
And my heart play'd a regular tune in my breast.
But now, lack-a-day! what a change for the worse,
'Tis as heavy as lead, yet as wild as a horse.

"My fingers, ere love had tormented my mind,
Could guide my pen gently to what I design'd.
I could make an enigma, a rebus, or riddle,
Or tell a short tale of a dog and a fiddle.
But since this vile Cupid has got in my brain,
I beg of the gods to assist in my strain.
And whatever my subject, the fancy still roves,
And sings of hearts, raptures, flames, sorrows, and loves."

[5] After long search a copy of Wheble's Magazine for 1772 has been discovered, and it contains, besides the prize poem on Hope, four other pieces, signed "G. C., Woodbridge, Suffolk:" "To Mira;" "The Atheist reclaimed;" "The Bee;" and "An Allegorical Fable." As might be supposed, there is hardly a line in any of these productions which I should be justified in reprinting. I shall, however, preserve the conclusion of the prize poem:—

"But, above all, the POET owns thy powers—
HOPE leads him on, and every fear devours;
He writes, and, unsuccessful, writes again,
Nor thinks the last laborious work in vain;
New schemes he forms, and various plots he tries,
To win the laurel, and possess the PRIZE."

The poet himself says, in "The Parting Hour,"—

"Minutely trace man's life: year after year,
Through all his days, let all his deeds appear—
And then, though some may in that life be strange,
Yet there appears no vast nor sudden change:
The links that bind those various deeds are seen,
And no mysterious void is left between:"—

but, it must be allowed, that we want several links to connect the author of "The Library" with the young lover of the above verses, or of

"THE WISH.

"My Mira, shepherds, *is* as fair
As sylvan nymphs who haunt the vale,
As sylphs who dwell in purest air,
As fays who skim the dusky dale,
As Venus was when Venus fled
From watery Triton's oozy bed.

"My Mira, shepherds, has a voice
As soft as Syrinx in her grove,
As sweet as echo makes her choice,
As mild as whispering virgin-love;
As gentle as the winding stream,
Or fancy's song when poets dream." &c. &c.

Before, however, he left Woodbridge, Mr. Crabbe not only wrote, but found courage and means (the latter I know not how) to print and publish at Ipswich a short piece, entitled "Inebriety, a Poem," in which, however rude and unfinished as a whole, there are some couplets not deficient in point and terseness, and not a little to indicate that devotion to the style of Pope, which can be traced through all the maturer labours of his pen. The parallel passages from the Dunciad and the Essay on Man, quoted in the notes, are frequent; and to them he modestly enough alludes in "The Preface," from which, as an early specimen of his prose, it may be worth while to extract a paragraph:—

"Presumption or meanness are both too often the only articles to be discovered in a preface. Whilst one author haughtily affects to despise the public attention, another timidly courts it. I would no more beg for than disdain applause, and therefore should advance nothing in favour of the following little Poem, did it not appear a cruelty and disregard to send a first production naked into the world.

"The WORLD!—how presumptuous, and yet how trifling the sound. Every man, gentle reader, has a world of his own, and whether it consists of half a score or half a thousand friends, 'tis his, and he loves to boast of it. Into my world, therefore, I commit this, my Muse's earliest labour, nothing doubting the clemency of the climate, nor fearing the partiality of the censorious.

"Something by way of apology for this trifle is, perhaps, necessary; especially for those parts wherein I have taken such great liberties with Mr. Pope. That gentleman, secure in immortal fame, would forgive me: forgive me, too, my friendly critic; I promise thee, thou wilt find the extracts from that Swan of Thames the best part of the performance."

I may also transcribe a few of the opening couplets, in which we have the student of Pope, as well as of surgery, and not a few germs of the future Crabbe:—

"When Winter stern his gloomy front uprears,
A sable void the barren earth appears;
The meads no more their former verdure boast,
Fast bound their streams, and all their beauty lost.
The herds, the flocks, in icy garments mourn,
And wildly murmur for the Spring's return;
The fallen branches, from the sapless tree,
With glittering fragments strow the glassy way;
From snow-topp'd hills the whirlwinds keenly blow,
Howl through the woods, and pierce the vales below;
Through the sharp air a flaky torrent flies,
Mocks the slow sight, and hides the gloomy skies;
The fleecy clouds their chilly bosoms bare,
And shed their substance on the floating air;
The floating air their downy substance glides
Through springing waters, and prevents their tides;
Seizes the rolling waves, and, as a God,
Charms their swift race, and stops the refluent flood.
The opening valves, which fill the venal road,
Then scarcely urge along the sanguine flood.
The labouring pulse a slower motion rules,
The tendons stiffen, and the spirit cools;
Each asks the aid of Nature's sister, Art,
To cheer the senses, and to warm the heart.
The gentle Fair on nervous tea relies,
Whilst gay good-nature sparkles in her eyes;
An inoffensive scandal fluttering round,
Too rough to tickle, and too light to wound;
Champagne the courtier drinks, the spleen to chase,
The colonel Burgundy, and Port his grace."

(He was not yet a ducal chaplain.)

"See Inebriety! her wand she waves,
And, lo! her pale—and, lo! her purple slaves.
Sots in embroidery, and sots in crape,
Of every order, station, rank, and shape;
The king, who nods upon his rattle-throne,
The staggering peer, to midnight revel prone;
The slow-tongued bishop, and the deacon sly,
The humble pensioner, and gownsman dry;
The proud, the mean, the selfish, and the great,
Swell the dull throng, and stagger into state.
"Lo! proud Flaminius, at the splendid board,
The easy chaplain of an atheist lord,
Quaffs the bright juice, with all the gust of sense,
And clouds his brain in torpid elegance;
In China vases, see! the sparkling ill;
From gay decanters view the rosy rill;
The neat-carved pipes in silver settle laid;
The screw by mathematic cunning made:
The whole a pompous and enticing scene,
And grandly glaring for the surpliced swain:
Oh, happy priest! whose God, like Egypt's, lies
At once the Deity, and sacrifice."

He, indeed, seems to be particularly fond of "girding at" the cloth, which, in those early and thoughtless days, he had never dreamed he himself should wear and honour. It is only just to let the student of his maturer verses and formed character see in what way the careless apprentice could express himself, respecting a class of which he could then know nothing:—

"The vicar at the table's front presides,
Whose presence a monastic life derides;
The reverend wig, in sideway order placed,
The reverend band, by rubric stains disgraced,
The leering eye, in wayward circles roll'd,
Mark him the Pastor of a jovial fold;
Whose various texts excite a loud applause,
Favouring the bottle, and the Good Old Cause.
See the dull smile, which fearfully appears,
When gross Indecency her front uprears.
The joy conceal'd the fiercer burns within,
As masks afford the keenest gust to sin:
Imagination helps the reverend sire,
And spreads the sails of sub-divine desire.—
But when the gay immoral joke goes round,
When Shame, and all her blushing train are drown'd,
Rather than hear his God blasphemed, he takes
The last loved glass, and then the board forsakes.
Not that religion prompts the sober thought,
But slavish custom has the practice taught:
Besides, this zealous son of warm devotion
Has a true Levite bias for promotion;
Vicars must with discretion go astray,
Whilst bishops may be d——d the nearest way."[6]

Such, in his twentieth year, was the poetry of Crabbe. His Sarah encouraged him, by her approbation of his verses; and her precept and example were of use to him in a minor matter, but still of some importance to a young author. His hand-writing had hitherto been feeble and bad; it now became manly, clear, and not inelegant. Miss Elmy's passion for music induced him also to make some efforts in that direction; but nature had given him a poor ear, and, after many a painful hour spent in trying to master "Grammachree" and "Over the water to Charlie," he laid aside his flute in despair.

To the period of his residence at Woodbridge, I suppose, may also be assigned the first growth of a more lasting passion—that for the study of botany; which, from early life to his latest years, my father cultivated with fond zeal, both in books and in the fields.

CHAPTER II.

1775—1780.

Termination of Mr. Crabbe's Apprenticeship—Visit to London—He sets up for himself at Aldborough—Failure of his Plans there—He gives up his Business, and proceeds to London as a literary Adventurer.

About the end of the year 1775, when he had at length completed his term of apprenticeship, Mr. Crabbe returned to Aldborough, hoping to find the means of repairing to the metropolis, and there to complete his professional education. The Salt-master's affairs, however, were not in such order that he could at once gratify his son's inclination in this respect; neither could he afford to maintain him at home in idleness; and the young man, now accustomed to far different pursuits and habits, was obliged to return to the

[6] "Inebriety, a Poem, in three Parts. Ipswich, printed and sold by C. Punchard, Bookseller, in the Butter-Market, 1775. Price one shilling and sixpence."

labours of the warehouse on Slaughden quay. His pride disdained this homely employment; his spirit rose against what he considered arbitrary conduct: he went sullen and angry to his work, and violent quarrels often ensued between him and his father. He frequently confessed in after-times that his behaviour in this affair was unjustifiable, and allowed that it was the old man's poverty, not his will, that consented to let him wear out any more of his days in such ignoble occupation.

I must add, however, that before he returned from Woodbridge, his father's habits had undergone a very unhappy change. In 1774 there was a contested election at Aldborough, and the Whig candidate, Mr. Charles Long, sought and found a very able and zealous partisan and agent in Mr. Crabbe. From that period his family dated the loss of domestic comfort, a rooted taste for the society of the tavern, and such an increase in the violence of his temper, that his meek-spirited wife, now in poor health, dreaded to hear his returning footsteps. If the food prepared for his meal did not please his fancy, he would fling the dishes about the room, and all was misery and terror. George was the chief support of his afflicted mother—her friend and her physician. He saw that her complaint was dropsical, and, from the first, anticipated the fatal result which, after a few years of suffering, ensued. One of his favourite employments was to catch some small fish called "butts," the only thing for which she could muster a little appetite, for her nightly meal. He was in all things her dutiful comforter; and it may be supposed that, under such circumstances, he was not sometimes able to judge favourably of her husband's conduct, even where there might be nothing really blameworthy in it. To him, he acknowledged, his father had always been "substantially kind."

His leisure hours were spent in the study of botany, and other branches of natural history; and, perhaps, the ill success of "Inebriety" had no small share in withdrawing him, for a time, from the practice of versification. He appears, indeed, to have had, at this period, every disposition to pursue his profession with zeal. "The time," he says, in the sketch already quoted, "had come, when he was told, and believed, that he had more important concerns to engage him than verse; and therefore, for some years, though he occasionally found time to write lines upon 'Mira's Birthday' and 'Silvia's Lapdog,' though he composed enigmas and solved rebuses, he had some degree of forbearance, and did not believe that the knowledge of diseases, and the sciences of anatomy and physiology, were to be acquired by the perusal of Pope's Homer and a Treatise on the Art of Poetry."

His professional studies, in the mean time, continued to be interrupted by other things than the composition of trifles for a corner of Wheble's Magazine; and the mortifications he daily underwent may be guessed at from the following incident, which he used to relate, even in his old age, with deep feeling:—One of his Woodbridge acquaintances, now a smart young surgeon, came over to Aldborough, on purpose to see him; he was directed to the quay of Slaughden, and there discovered George Crabbe, piling up butter-casks, in the dress of a common warehouseman. The visitor had the vanity and cruelty to despise the honest industry of his friend, and to say to him, in a stern, authoritative tone,—"Follow me, sir." George followed him at a respectful distance, until they reached the inn, where he was treated with a long and angry lecture, inculcating pride and rebellion. He heard it in sad silence: his spirit was, indeed, subdued, but he refused to take any decided step in opposition to his parent's will, or rather, the hard necessities of his case. "My friends," said my father, in concluding this story, "had always an ascendancy over me." I may venture to add, that this was the consequence purely of the gentle warmth of his affections; for he was at heart as brave as affectionate. Never was there a more hopeless task than to rule him by intimidation.

After he had lingered at Aldborough for a considerable time, his father made an effort to send him to London, and he embarked in one of the trading sloops at Slaughden Quay, ostensibly to walk the hospitals, and attend medical lectures in customary form, but in reality with a purse too slenderly provided to enable him to do this; and, in short, with the purpose, as he said, of "picking up a little surgical knowledge as cheap as he could." He took up his quarters in the house of an Aldborough family, humble tradespeople, who resided somewhere in Whitechapel; and continued there for about eight or ten months, until his small resources were exhausted, when he returned once more to Suffolk, but little, I suspect, the better for the desultory sort of instruction that had alone been within his reach. Among other distresses of this time, he had, soon after he reached London, a narrow escape from being carried before the Lord Mayor as a resurrectionist. His landlady, having discovered that he had a dead child in his closet, for the purpose of dissection, took it into her head that it was no other than an infant whom she had had the misfortune to lose the week before. "Dr. Crabbe had dug up William; she was certain he had; and to the Mansion-house he must go." Fortunately, the countenance of the child had not yet been touched with the knife. The "doctor" arrived when the tumult was at its height, and, opening the closet door, at once established his innocence of the charge.

On his return to Aldborough, he engaged himself as an assistant in the shop of a Mr.

Maskill, who had lately commenced business there as a surgeon and apothecary—a stern and powerful man. Mr. Crabbe, the first time he had occasion to write his name, chanced to misspell it *Maskwell;* and this gave great offence. "D—n you, Sir," he exclaimed, "do you take me for a proficient in deception? Mask-*ill*—Mask-*ill;* and so you shall find me." He assumed a despotic authority which the assistant could ill brook; and yet, conscious how imperfectly he was grounded in the commonest details of the profession, he was obliged to submit in silence to a new series of galling vexations. Nor was his situation at all improved, when, at the end of some miserable months, Mr. Maskill transferred his practice to another town, and he was encouraged to set up for himself in Aldborough.

He dearly loved liberty, and he was now his own master; and, above all, he could now more frequently visit Miss Elmy, at Parham: but the sense of a new responsibility pressed sorely and continually on his mind; and he never awoke without shuddering at the thought, that some operation of real difficulty might be thrown in his way before night. Ready sharpness of mind and mechanical cleverness of hand are the first essentials in a surgeon; and he wanted them both, and knew his deficiencies far better than any one else did. He had, moreover, a clever and active opponent in the late Mr. Raymond; and the practice which fell to his share was the poorest the place afforded. His very passion for botany was injurious to him; for his ignorant patients, seeing him return from his walks with handfuls of weeds, decided that, as Dr. Crabbe got his medicines in the ditches, he could have little claim for payment. On the other hand, he had many poor relations; and some of these, old women, were daily visitors, to request "something comfortable from cousin George;" that is to say, doses of the most expensive tonics in his possession.

> "If once induced these cordial sips to try,
> All feel the ease, and few the danger fly;
> For while obtain'd, of drams they 've all the force,
> And when denied, then drams are the resource."

Add to all this, that my poor father was a lover, separated from his mistress, and that his heart was in the land of imagination—for he had now resumed his pen—and it is not wonderful that he soon began to despair altogether of succeeding in his profession.

Yet there was a short period when fortune seemed somewhat more favourable to him, even in Aldborough. In the summer of 1778, the Warwickshire militia were quartered in the town, and his emoluments were considerably improved in consequence. He had also the pleasure of finding his society greatly estimated by the officers, and formed a very strong friendship with one of them, Lieutenant Hayward, a highly promising young gentleman, who afterwards died in the East Indies. The Colonel—afterwards the celebrated field-marshal, Conway—took much notice of Mr. Crabbe; and among other marks of his attention, was the gift of some valuable Latin works on the favourite subject of Botany, which proved of advantage to him in more ways than one: for the possession of them induced him to take up more accurately than heretofore the study of the language in which they were composed; and the hours he now spent on Hudson's "Flora Anglica"[1] enabled him to enjoy Horace, and to pass with credit through certain examinations of an after-period. The winter following the Warwick militia were replaced by the Norfolk; and Mr. Crabbe had the good fortune to be, for a time, their medical attendant also, and to profit, as before, by the society of educated gentlemen, who appreciated his worth, and were interested and pleased with his conversation.

This was a passing gleam of sunshine; but the chief consolation of all his distresses at this period, was the knowledge that he had gained a faithful and affectionate heart at Parham, and the virtuous and manly love which it was his nature to feel, imparted a buoyancy to his spirits in the very midst of his troubles. His taste and manners were different from those of the family with whom Miss Elmy resided, and he was at first barely tolerated. The uncle, Mr. Tovell, a wealthy yeoman of the highest class so denominated,—a class ever jealous of the privileges of literature,—would now and then growl in the hearing of his guest,—"What good does their d—d learning do them?" By degrees, his sterling worth made its due impression: he was esteemed, then beloved, by them all; but still he had every now and then to put up with a rough sneer about "the d—d learning."

Miss Elmy occasionally visited her mother at Beccles; and here my father found a society more adapted to his acquirements. The family had, though in apparently humble circumstances, always been numbered among the gentry of the place, and possessed education and manners that entitled them to this distinction.[2] It was in his walks between Aldborough and Beccles that Mr. Crabbe passed through the very scenery described in the first part of "The Lover's

[1] In one of his early Note-books he has written:—

> "Ah! blest be the days when with Mira I took
> The learning of Love.....
> When we pluck'd the wild blossoms that blush'd in the grass,
> And I taught my dear maid of their species and class;
> For Conway, the friend of mankind, had decreed
> That Hudson should show us the wealth of the mead."

Mr. Conway's character is familiar to every reader of his cousin Horace Walpole's Letters.

[2] Miss Elmy's father was now no more. He had been a tanner at Beccles, but failed in his business, and went to Guadaloupe, where he died some time before Mr. Crabbe knew the family.

Journey;" while near Beccles, in another direction, he found the contrast of rich vegetation introduced in the latter part of that tale; nor have I any doubt that the *disappointment* of the story figures out something that, on one of these visits, befell himself, and the feelings with which he received it:—

> "Gone to a friend, she tells me.—I commend
> Her purpose:—means she to a *female friend?*" &c.

For truth compels me to say, that he was by no means free from the less amiable sign of a strong attachment—jealousy. The description of this self-torment, which occurs in the sixth book of "Tales of the Hall," could only have been produced by one who had undergone the pain himself; and the catastrophe which follows may be considered as a vivid representation of his happier hours at Beccles. Miss Elmy was then remarkably pretty; she had a lively disposition, and, having generally more than her share of attention in a mixed company, her behaviour might, without any coquettish inclination, occasion painful surmises in a sensitive lover, who could only at intervals join her circle.

In one of these visits to Beccles, my father was in the most imminent danger of losing his life. Having, on a sultry summer's day rowed his Sarah to a favourite fishing spot on the river Waveney, he left her busy with the rod and line, and withdrew to a retired place about a quarter of a mile off, to bathe. Not being a swimmer, nor calculating his depth, he plunged at once into danger; for his foot slid on the soft mud towards the centre of the stream. He made a rush for the bank, lost his footing, and the flood boiled over his head; he struggled, but in vain; and his own words paint his situation:—

> "An undefined sensation stopp'd my breath;
> Disorder'd views and threat'ning signs of death
> Met in one moment, and a terror gave
> ——I cannot paint it—to the moving grave:
> My thoughts were all distressing, hurried, mix'd,
> On all things fixing, not a moment fix'd.
> Brother, I have not—man has not—the power
> To paint the horrors of that life-long hour;
> Hour!—but of time I knew not—when I found
> Hope, youth, life, love, and all they promised, drown'd."
>
> *Tales of the Hall.*

My father could never clearly remember how he was saved. He at last found himself grasping some weeds, and by their aid reached the bank.

Mr. and Mrs. Crabbe, cordially approving their son's choice, invited Miss Elmy to pass some time beneath their roof at Aldborough; and my father had the satisfaction to witness the kindness with which she was treated by both his parents, and the commencement of a strong attachment between her and his sister. During this visit[3] he was attacked by a very dangerous fever; and the attention of his affianced wife was unwearied. So much was his mind weakened by the violence and pertinacity of this disorder, that, on his dawning convalescence, he actually cried like a child, because he was considerately denied the food which his renovated stomach longed for. I have heard them laugh heartily at the tears he shed, because Sarah and his sister refused him a lobster on which he had set his affections. For a considerable time, he was unable to walk upright; but he was at length enabled to renew, with my mother, his favourite rambles—to search for fuci on the shore, or to botanise on the heath: and again he expresses his own feelings, in the following passage of "The Borough:"—

> "See! one relieved from anguish, and to-day
> Allow'd to walk, and look an hour away.
> Two months confined by fever, frenzy, pain,
> He comes abroad, and is himself again.
> He stops, as one unwilling to advance,
> Without another and another glance. . . .
> With what a pure and simple joy he sees
> Those sheep and cattle browsing at their ease!
> Easy himself, there's nothing breathes or moves,
> But he would cherish;—all that lives he loves."

On Miss Elmy's return to Parham, she was seized with the same or a kindred disorder, but still more violent and alarming; and none of her friends expected her recovery. My father was kindly invited to remain in the house. A fearful delirium succeeded: all hope appeared irrational: and then it was that he felt the bitterness of losing a fond and faithful heart. I remember being greatly affected, at a very early period, by hearing him describe the feelings with which he went into a small garden her uncle had given her, to water her flowers; intending, after her death, to take them to Aldborough, and keep them for ever. The disorder at last took a favourable turn.

But a calamity of the severest kind awaited her uncle and aunt. Their only child, a fine hale girl of fourteen, humoured by her mother, adored by her father, was cut off in a few days by an inflammatory sore throat. Her parents were bowed down to the earth; so sudden and unexpected was the blow. It made a permanent alteration at Parham. Mr. Tovell's health declined from that period, though he lived many years with a broken spirit. Mrs. Tovell, a busy, bustling character, who scorned the exhibition of what she termed "fine feelings," became for a time an altered woman, and, like Agag, "walked softly." I have heard my father describe his astonishment at learning, as he rode into the stable-yard, that Miss Tovell was *dead*. It seemed as if it must be a fiction, so essential did her life appear to her parents. He said he never recollected to have felt any dread equal to that of entering the house on this occasion; for my mother might now be considered as, in part at least, Mr. Tovell's heir, and he anticipated

[3] At this period the whole family were still living together. Some time after, my father and his sister had separate lodgings, at a Mr. Aldrich's.

the reception he should meet with, and well knew what she must suffer from the first bitterness of minds too uncultivated to suppress their feelings. He found it as painful as he had foreboded. Mr. Tovell was seated in his arm-chair, in stern silence; but the tears coursed each other over his manly face. His wife was weeping violently, her head reclining on the table. One or two female friends were there, to offer consolation. After a long silence, Mr. Tovell observed,—"She is now out of *every body's* way, poor girl!" One of the females remarked that it was wrong, very wrong, to grieve, because she was gone to a better place. "How do I know where she is gone?" was the bitter reply; and then there was another long silence.

But, in the course of time, these gloomy feelings subsided. Mr. Crabbe was received as usual, nay, with increased kindness; for he had known their "dear Jane." But though the hospitality of the house was undiminished, and occasionally the sound of loud, joyous mirth was heard, yet the master was never himself again.

Whether my father's more frequent visits to Parham, growing dislike to his profession, or increasing attachment to poetical composition, contributed most to his ultimate abandonment of medicine, I do not profess to tell. I have said, that his spirit was buoyed up by the inspiring influence of requited affection; but this necessarily led to other wishes, and to them the obstacles appeared insuperable. Miss Elmy was too prudent to marry, where there seemed to be no chance of a competent livelihood; and he, instead of being in a position to maintain a family, could hardly, by labour which he abhorred, earn daily bread for himself. He was proud, too; and, though conscious that he had not deserved success in his profession, he was also conscious of possessing no ordinary abilities, and brooded with deep mortification on his failure. Meantime he had perused with attention the works of the British poets and of his favourite Horace; and his desk had gradually been filled with verses which he justly esteemed more worthy of the public eye than "Inebriety." He indulged, in short, the dreams of a young poet:—

> "A little time, and he should burst to light,
> And admiration of the world excite;
> And every friend, now cool and apt to blame
> His fond pursuit, would wonder at his tame.
> 'Fame shall be mine;—then wealth shall I possess;—
> And beauty next an ardent lover bless.'"
>
> *The Patron.*

He deliberated often and long,—"resolved and re-resolved,"—and again doubted; but, well aware as he was of the hazard he was about to encounter, he at last made up his mind. One gloomy day, towards the close of the year 1779, he had strolled to a bleak and cheerless part of the cliff above Aldborough, called "The Marsh Hill," brooding, as he went, over the humiliating necessities of his condition, and plucking every now and then, I have no doubt, the hundredth specimen of some common weed. He stopped opposite a shallow, muddy piece of water, as desolate and gloomy as his own mind, called the Leech-pond, and "it was while I gazed on it," he said to my brother and me, one happy morning,—"that I determined to go to London and venture all."

In one of his early note-books, under the date of December 31, 1779, I find the following entry. It is one upon which I shall offer no comment:—

"A thousand years, most adored Creator, are, in thy sight, as one day. So contract, in my sight, my calamities!

"The year of sorrow and care, of poverty and disgrace, of disappointment and wrong, is now passing on to join the Eternal. Now, O Lord! let, I beseech thee, my afflictions and prayers be remembered;—let my faults and follies be forgotten!

"O thou, who art the Fountain of Happiness, give me better submission to thy decrees; better disposition to correct my flattering hopes; better courage to bear up under my state of oppression.

"The year past, O my God! let it not be to me again a torment—the year coming, if it is thy will, be it never such. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. Whether I live or whether I die, whether I be poor or whether I be prosperous, O my Saviour! may I be thine! Amen."

In the autobiographical sketch already quoted, my father thus continues his story:—"Mr. Crabbe, after as full and perfect a survey of the good and evil before him as his prejudices, inclinations, and little knowledge of the world enabled him to take, finally resolved to abandon his profession. His health was not robust, his spirits were not equal; assistance he could expect none, and he was not so sanguine as to believe he could do without it. With the best verses he could write, and with very little more, he quitted the place of his birth; not without the most serious apprehensions of the consequence of such a step—apprehensions which were conquered, and barely conquered, by the more certain evil of the prospect before him, should he remain where he was.

"When he thus fled from a gloomy prospect to one as uncertain, he had not heard of a youthful adventurer, whose fate it is probable would, in some degree, have affected his spirits, if it had not caused an alteration in his purpose. Of Chatterton, his extraordinary abilities, his enterprising spirit, his writing in periodical publications, his daring project, and his melancholy fate, he had yet learned nothing; otherwise it may be supposed that a warning of such a kind would have had no small influence upon a mind rather vexed with the present than expecting much from the future, and not sufficiently happy

and at ease to draw consolation from vanity—much less from a comparison in which vanity would have found no trifling mortification." [4]

When his father was at length informed that he felt it to be of no use to struggle longer against the difficulties of his situation, the old man severely reproached him with the expenses the family had incurred, in order to afford him an opening into a walk of life higher than their own; but when he, in return, candidly explained how imperfectly he had ever been prepared for the exercise of his profession, the Salt-master in part admitted the validity of his representation, and no further opposed his resolution.

But the means of carrying this resolution into effect were still to seek. His friends were all as poor as himself; and he knew not where to apply for assistance. In this dilemma, he at length addressed a letter to the late Mr. Dudley North, brother to the candidate for Aldborough, requesting the loan of a small sum; "and a very extraordinary letter it was," said Mr. North to his petitioner some years afterwards: "I did not hesitate for a moment."

The sum advanced by Mr. North, in compliance with his request, was *five pounds;* and, after settling his affairs at Aldborough, and embarking himself and his whole worldly substance on board a sloop at Slaughden, to seek his fortune in the Great City, he found himself master of a box of clothes, a small case of surgical instruments, and three pounds in money. During the voyage he lived with the sailors of the vessel, and partook of their fare.

In looking back to the trifling incidents which I have related in this chapter, I feel how inadequate is the conception they will convey of feelings so deep and a mind so exuberant. These were the only circumstances that I heard him or others mention relative to that early period; but how different would have been the description, had he himself recorded the strongest of his early impressions! Joining much of his father's violence with a keen susceptibility of mortification, his mind must have been at times torn by tumultuous passions; always tempered, however, by the exceeding kindness of his heart. There can scarcely be a more severe trial than for one conscious of general superiority to find himself an object of contempt, for some real and palpable defects. With a mind infinitely above his circumstances, he was yet incompetent to his duties, both in talent and knowledge; and he felt that the opinion of the public, in this respect, was but too just. Nor were those the only trials he had to endure; but the strong and painful feelings to which he was subjected in the very outset of life, however distressing *then*, were unquestionably favourable to his education as a poet, and his moral character as a man.

The following lines, from a manuscript volume, appear to have been composed after he had, on this occasion, bidden farewell to Miss Elmy:—

"The hour arrived! I sigh'd and said,
How soon the happiest hours are fled!
On wings of down they lately flew,
But then their moments pass'd with you;
And still with you could I but be,
On downy wings they 'd always flee.

"Say, did you not, the way you went,
Feel the soft balm of gay content?
Say, did you not all pleasures find,
Of which you left so few behind?
I think you did: for well I know
My parting prayer would make it so.

"May she, I said, life's choicest goods partake,
Those, late in life, for nobler still forsake—
The bliss of one, th' esteem'd of many live,
With all that Friendship would, and all that Love can give!"

I shall conclude this chapter with the stronger verses in which he, some months after, expressed the gloomier side of his feelings on quitting his native place—the very verses, he had reason to believe, which first satisfied Burke that he was a true poet:—

"Here wand'ring long, amid these frowning fields
I sought the simple life that Nature yields;
Rapine, and wrong, and fear usurp'd her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race,
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,
Wait on the shore, and, as the waves run high,
On the tost vessel bend their eager eye,
Which, to their coast directs its vent'rous way,
Theirs or the ocean's miserable prey.

"As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land,
While still for flight the ready wing is spread—
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled:
Fled from these shores where guilt and rapine reign,
And cried, Ah! hapless they who still remain,—
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,
Whose greedy waves devour the lessening shore,
Till some fierce tide, with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away;
When the sad tenant weeps from door to door,
And begs a poor protection from the poor."

The Village.

CHAPTER III.

1780.

Mr. Crabbe's Difficulties and Distresses in London—Publication of his Poem, "The Candidate"—His unsuccessful Applications to Lord North, Lord Shelburne, and other eminent Individuals—His "Journal to Mira."

ALTHOUGH the chance of his being so successful in his metropolitan *début* as to find in his literary

[4] "Talking," says my brother John, "of the difficulties of his early years, when, with a declining practice, riding from one cottage to another, and glad to relieve his mind by fixing it on the herbs that grew on the wayside, he often made the assertion, which I could never agree to, that it was necessity that drove him to be an author;—and more than once he quoted the line—

'Some fall so hard that they rebound again.'"

talents the means of subsistence must have appeared slender in the eyes of Mr. Crabbe's Suffolk friends, and although he himself was anything but sanguine in his anticipations;—yet it must be acknowledged, that he arrived in London at a time not unfavourable for a new candidate in poetry. The field may be said to have lain open before him. The giants Swift and Pope had passed away, leaving each in his department examples never to be excelled; but the style of each had been so long imitated by inferior persons, that the world was not unlikely to welcome some one who should strike into a newer path. The strong and powerful satirist Churchill, the classic Gray, and the inimitable Goldsmith, had also departed; and, more recently still, Chatterton had paid the bitter penalty of his imprudence, under circumstances which must surely have rather disposed the patrons of talent to watch the next opportunity that might offer itself of encouraging genius "by poverty depressed." The stupendous Johnson, unrivalled in general literature, had, from an early period, withdrawn himself from poetry. Cowper, destined to fill so large a space in the public eye, somewhat later, had not as yet appeared as an author[1]; and as for Burns, he was still unknown beyond the obscure circle of his fellow-villagers. The moment, therefore, might appear favourable for Mr. Crabbe's meditated appeal:[2] and yet, had he foreseen all the sorrows and disappointments which awaited him in his new career, it is probable he would either have remained in his native place, or, if he had gone to London at all, engaged himself to beat the mortar in some dispensary. Happily his hopes ultimately prevailed over his fears: his Sarah cheered him by her approbation of his bold adventure; and his mind soared and exulted when he suddenly felt himself freed from the drudgery and anxieties of his hated profession.

In his own little biographical sketch he says, that, "on relinquishing every hope of rising in his profession, he repaired to the metropolis, and resided in lodgings with a family in the city: for reasons which he might not himself be able to assign, he was afraid of going to the west end of the town. He was placed, it is true, near to some friends of whose kindness he was assured, and was probably loth to lose that domestic and cheerful society which he doubly felt in a world of strangers."

The only acquaintance he had on entering London was a Mrs. Burcham, who had been in early youth a friend of Miss Elmy, and who was now the wife of a linen-draper in Cornhill. This worthy woman and her husband received him with cordial kindness; they invited him to make their house his home whenever he chose; and as often as he availed himself of this invitation, he was treated with that frank familiarity which cancels the appearance of obligation. It might be supposed, that with such friends to lean upon, he would have been secure against actual distress; but his was, in some points, a proud spirit: he never disclosed to them the extent of his difficulties. Nothing but sheer starvation could ever have induced him to do so; and not even that, as long as there was a poor-house in the land to afford him refuge. All they knew was, that he had come to town a literary adventurer: but though ignorant of the exact nature of his designs, as well as of the extreme narrowness of his pecuniary resources, they often warned him of the fate of Chatterton—of whose genius and misfortunes, as we have seen, he had never heard while he remained in Suffolk.

To be near these friends, he took lodgings close to the Exchange, in the house of Mr. Vickery,[3] a hair-dresser, then or soon afterwards of great celebrity in his calling; and on the family's removing some months later to Bishopsgate-street, he accompanied them to their new residence. I may mention that, so little did he at first foresee the distress in which a shilling would be precious, that on taking up his quarters at Mr. Vickery's, he equipped himself with a fashionable tie-wig, which must have made a considerable hole in his three pounds. However, no sooner had he established himself here, than he applied, with the utmost diligence, to the pursuits for which he had sacrificed every other prospect. He had soon transcribed and corrected the poetical pieces he had brought with him from the country; and composed two dramas and a variety of prose essays, in imitation, some of Swift, others of Addison; and he was ere long in communication with various booksellers with a view to publication. "In this lodging," says the poet's own sketch, "he passed something more than one year, during which his chief study was to improve in versification, to read all such books as he could command, and to take as full and particular a view of mankind as his time and finances enabled him to do."

While residing in the City he often spent his

[1] Cowper's first publication was in 1782, when he was in the fiftieth year of his age.

[2] I find these lines in one of his note-books for 1780.—

"When summer's tribe, her rosy tribe, are fled,
And drooping beauty mourns her blossoms shed,
Some humbler sweet may cheer the pensive swain,
And simpler beauties deck the withering plain.
And thus when Verse her wint'ry prospect weeps,
When Pope is gone, and mighty Milton sleeps,
When Gray in lofty lines has ceased to soar,
And gentle Goldsmith charms the town no more,
An humbler Bard the widow'd Muse invites,
Who led by hope and inclination writes:
With half their art he tries the soul to move,
And swell the softer strain with themes of love."

[3] Mr. Vickery is still in life, a most respectable octogenarian. He laments that his memory retains little of Mr. Crabbe, except that he was "a quiet, amiable, genteel young man; much esteemed by the family for the regularity of all his conduct."

evening at a small coffee-house near the Exchange, where, if prudence allowed only the most frugal refreshment, he had a more gratifying entertainment in the conversation of several young men, most of them teachers of mathematics, who, in his own words, "met after the studies and labours of the day, to commence other studies and labours of a lighter and more agreeable kind; and then it was," he continues, "that Mr. Crabbe experienced the inestimable relief which one mind may administer to another. He particularly acknowledges his obligations to Mr. Bonnycastle, the (late) Master of the Military Academy at Woolwich, for many hours of consolation, amusement, and instruction." With Mr. Bonnycastle he formed a close intimacy and attachment; and those who are acquainted with the character of that respected man will easily imagine the pleasure and advantage Mr. Crabbe must have derived from his society. To eminence in his own vocation he joined much general knowledge, considerable taste in the fine arts,[4] colloquial talents of a high order, and a warm and enlarged heart. Another of this little company was Mr. Isaac Dalby, afterwards professor of mathematics in the Military College at Marlow, and employed by the Ordnance department on the trigonometrical survey of England and Wales; and a third was the well-known mathematician, Reuben Burrow, originally a merchant's clerk in the City, who subsequently rose to high distinction in the service of the East India Company, and died in 1791, while engaged in the trigonometrical survey of Bengal.

These then obscure but eminently gifted and worthy men were Mr. Crabbe's chosen companions, and to listen to their instructive talk was the most refreshing relaxation of his manly and vigorous mind: but bodily exercise was not less necessary for a frame which, at that period, was anything but robust, and he often walked with Mr. Bonnycastle, when he went to the various schools in the suburbs, but still more frequently strolled alone into the country, with a small edition of Ovid, or Horace, or Catullus, in his pocket. Two or three of these little volumes remained in his possession in latter days, and he set a high value on them; for, said he, "they were the companions of my adversity." His favourite haunt was Hornsey-wood, and there he often renewed his old occupation of searching for plants and insects. On one occasion, he had walked farther than usual into the country, and felt himself too much exhausted to return to town. He could not afford to give himself any refreshment at a public-house, much less to pay for a lodging; so he stretched himself on a mow of hay, beguiled the evening with Tibullus, and, when he could read no longer, slept there till the morning. Such were his habits and amusements; nor do I believe that he ever saw the inside of a theatre, or of any public building, but a church or chapel, until the pressing difficulties of his situation had been overcome. When, many years afterwards, Mr. Bonnycastle was sending his son to London, he strongly enforced upon the young gentleman the early example of his friend, Mr. Crabbe, then enjoying the success of his second series of poems. "Crabbe," said he, "never suffered his attention to be diverted for a moment by the novelties with which he was surrounded at that trying period; but gave his whole mind to the pursuit by which he was then striving to live, and by which he in due time attained to competence and honour."

When my father had completed some shorter pieces in verse, he offered them for publication; but they were rejected. He says in his Sketch, "he was not encouraged by the reception which his manuscripts experienced from those who are said to be not the worst judges of literary composition. He was, indeed, assured by a bookseller, who afterwards published for him, that he must not suppose that the refusal to purchase proceeded from a want of merit in the poems. Such, however, was his inference; and that thought had the effect which it ought—he took more pains, and tried new subjects. In one respect he was unfortunate: while preparing a more favourable piece for the inspection of a gentleman whom he had then in view, he hazarded the publication of an anonymous performance, and had the satisfaction of hearing, in due time, that something (not much, indeed—but a something was much) would arise from it; but while he gathered encouragement, and looked forward to more than mere encouragement from this essay, the publisher failed, and his hope of profit was as transitory as the fame of his nameless production."

This production[5] was "THE CANDIDATE, a Poetical Epistle to the Authors of the Monthly Review," which was published early in 1780, by H. Payne, opposite Marlborough House, Pall-Mall; a thin quarto of 34 pages, and bearing on the title-page a motto from Horace:—"Multa quidem nobis facimus mala sæpe poetæ," &c. It was a call on the attention, not an appeal from the verdict, of those whom he considered the most influential critics of the time; and it received, accordingly, a very cold and brief notice in their number for August; wherein, indeed, nothing is dwelt upon but some incorrectness of rhymes, and "that material defect, the

[4] At one time, Mr. Bonnycastle was employed to revise and correct a MS. of Cowper; but he and that poet did not agree in their tastes—Mr. Bonnycastle being a stanch advocate for the finish and polish of Pope, while the other had far different models in higher estimation.

[5] There was no name in its title-page: the author, however, *hinted* his name:—

"Our Mira's name in future times shall shine,
And shepherds—though the harshest—envy mine."—p. 21.

want of a proper subject." Nor was the Gentleman's Magazine more courteous. "If," said Mr. Urban, "the authors addressed agree with us in their estimate, they will not give this *Candidate* much encouragement to stand a poll at Parnassus."

Whether "The Candidate'" did not deserve rather a more encouraging reception, the public will soon have an opportunity of judging, as this long-forgotten poem, with some other early pieces, will be included in the second volume of the present collection.

The failure of Mr. Payne plunged the young poet into great perplexity. He was absolutely under the necessity of seeking some pecuniary aid; and he cast his eyes in succession on several of those eminent individuals who were then generally considered as liberal patrons of literature. Before he left Aldborough he had been advised to apply to the premier, Lord North; but he now applied to him in vain. A second application to Lord Shelburne met with no better success: and he often expressed in later times the feelings with which he contrasted his reception at this nobleman's door, in Berkeley-square, in 1780, with the courteous welcome which he received at a subsequent period in that same mansion, now Lansdowne House. He wrote also several times to the Lord Chancellor Thurlow; but with little better fortune. To the first letter, which enclosed a copy of verses, his Lordship returned for answer a cold polite note, regretting that his avocations did not leave him leisure to read verses. The great talents and discriminating judgment of Thurlow made him feel this repulse with double bitterness; and he addressed to his Lordship some strong but not disrespectful lines, intimating that, in former times, the encouragement of literature had been considered as a duty appertaining to the illustrious station he held. Of this effusion the Chancellor took no notice whatever.

But I have it in my power to submit to the reader some fragments of a JOURNAL which my father kept during this distressing period, for the perusal of his affianced wife. The manuscript was discovered lately in the possession of a sister of my mother's. My father had never mentioned the existence of any such treasure to his own family. It is headed "The Poet's Journal;" and I now transcribe it; interweaving, as it proceeds, a few observations, which occur to me as necessary to make it generally intelligible.

"THE POET'S JOURNAL."

"'Sunt lachrimæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.'

"'He felt whate'er of sorrows wound the soul,
But view'd Misfortune on her fairest side.'

"*April* 21, 1780.—I DEDICATE to you, my dear Mira, this Journal, and I hope it will be some amusement. God only knows what is to be my lot; but I have, as far as I can, taken your old advice, and turned affliction's better part outward, and am determined to reap as much consolation from my prospects as possible; so that, whatever befalls me, I will endeavour to suppose it has its benefits, though I cannot immediately see them.

"*April* 24.—Took lodgings at a Mr. Vickery's, near the Exchange: rather too expensive, but very convenient—and here I, on reflection, thought it best to publish, if I could do it with advantage, some little piece, before I attempted to introduce my principal work. Accordingly, I set about a poem, which I called 'The Hero, an Epistle to Prince William Henry.'"

[I must here interrupt the Journal for a moment, to explain. The "principal work" alluded to in the above entry was a prose treatise, entitled "*A Plan for the Examination of our Moral and Religious Opinions*," of which the first rough draft alone has been preserved: and to which, in one of his rhymed epistles to Mira, composed in this same April, 1780, my father thus alludes:—

"Of substance I 've thought, and the varied disputes
On the nature of man and the notions of brutes;
Of systems confuted, and systems explain'd,
Of science disputed and tenets maintain'd . . .
These, and such speculations on these kind of things,
Have robb'd my poor Muse of her plume and her wings;
Consumed the phlogiston you used to admire,
The spirit extracted, extinguish'd the fire;
Let out all the ether, so pure and refined,
And left but a mere *caput mortuum* behind."

With respect to the "Epistle to Prince William Henry"—now King William IV.,—I need only remind the reader that his Royal Highness had recently been serving with honour under Admiral Rodney, and was about to return to sea. The Poet, after many cautions against the flattery of courtiers, &c. &c., thus concluded his Epistle. I copy from his note-book:

"Who thus aspiring sings? would'st thou explore;
A Bard replies, who ne'er assumed before,—
One taught in hard affliction's school to bear
Life's ills, where every lesson costs a tear,
Who sees from thence, the proper point of view,
What the wise heed not, and the weak pursue.
* * * * *

"And now farewell, the drooping Muse exclaims.
She lothly leaves thee to the shock of war,
And fondly dwelling on her princely tar,
Wishes the noblest good her Harry's share,
Without her misery and without her care.
For, ah! unknown to thee, a rueful train,
Her hapless children, sigh, and sigh in vain;
A numerous band, denied the boon to die,
Half-starved, half-fed by fits of charity.
Unknown to thee! and yet, perhaps, thy ear
Has chanced each sad, amusing tale to hear,

How some, like Budgell, madly sank for ease ;[6]
How some, like Savage, sicken'd by degrees ;
How a pale crew, like helpless Otway, shed
The proud big tear on song-extorted bread ;
Or knew, like Goldsmith, some would stoop to choose
Contempt, and for the mortar quit the Muse.[7]

"One of this train—and of these wretches one—
Slave to the Muses, and to Misery son—
Now prays the Father of all Fates to shed,
On Henry, laurels ; on his poet, bread !

"Unhappy art ! decreed thine owner's curse ;
Vile diagnostic of consumptive purse ;
Still shall thy fatal force my soul perplex,
And every friend, and every brother vex !
Each fond companion !——No, I thank my God !
There rests my torment—there is hung the rod.
To friend, to fame, to family unknown,
Sour disappointments frown on me alone.
Who hates my song, and damns the poor design,
Shall wound no peace—shall grieve no heart but mine !

"Pardon, sweet Prince ! the thoughts that will intrude,
For want is absent, and dejection rude.
Methinks I hear, amid the shouts of Fame,
Each jolly victor hail my Henry's name ;
And, Heaven forbid that, in that jovial day,
One British bard should grieve when all are gay.
No ! let him find his country has redress,
And bid adieu to every fond distress ;
Or, touch'd too near, from joyful scenes retire,
Scorn to complain, and with one sigh expire !"

We now return to my father's Journal.]

"*April*, 25.—Reading the 'Daily Advertiser' of the 22nd, I found the following :—'Wanted an amanuensis, of grammatical education, and endued with a genius capable of making improvements in the writings of a gentleman not well versed in the English language.' Now, Vanity having no doubt of my capacity, I sent immediately the following note to a Mrs. Brooke, Coventry-street, Haymarket, the person at whose house I was to inquire :—'A person having the advantage of a grammatical education, and who supposes himself endowed with a genius capable of making emendations to the writings of any gentleman not perfectly acquainted with the English language, would be very happy to act as an amanuensis, where the confinement was not too rigid,' &c. An answer was returned verbally, by a porter, that the person should call in a day or two

"*April* 27.—Called on Mrs. Brooke, from whose husband or servant in the shop I had the intelligence that the gentleman was provided—twelve long miles walked away, loss of time, and a little disappointment, thought I :—now for my philosophy. Perhaps, then, I reflected, the 'gentleman' might not have so very much of that character as I at first supposed : he might be a sharper, and would not, or an author himself, and consequently could not, pay me. He might have employed me seven hours in a day over law or politics, and treated me at night with a Welsh rabbit and porter !—It 's all well ; I can at present buy porter myself, and am my own amanuensis.

"N.B. Sent my poem to Dodsley, and required him to return it to-morrow if not approved, otherwise its author would call upon him,

"*April* 28.—Judging it best to have two strings to the bow, and fearing Mr. Dodsley's will snap, I have finished another little work, from that awkward-titled piece 'The Foes of Mankind ;' have run it on to three hundred and fifty lines, and given it a still more odd name, 'An Epistle from the Devil.' To-morrow I hope to transcribe it fair, and send it by Monday.

"Mr. Dodsley's reply just received. 'Mr. Dodsley presents his compliments to the gentleman who favoured him with the enclosed poem, which he has returned, as he apprehends the sale of it would probably not enable him to give any consideration.' He does not mean by this to insinuate a want of merit in the poem, but rather a want of attention in the public.'

"Once more, my Mira, I 'll try, and write to Mr. Becket : if he fails me !—I know not how I shall ever get sufficient time to go through my principal design ; but I 've promised to keep up my spirits, and I will. God help me !

"*April* 28.—I thank Heaven my spirits are not at all affected by Dodsley's refusal. I have not been able to get the poem ready for Mr. Becket to-day, but will take some pains with it.

"I find myself under the disagreeable necessity of vending, or pawning, some of my more useless articles : accordingly have put into a paper such as cost about two or three guineas, and, being silver, have not greatly lessened in their value. The conscientious pawnbroker allowed me—"he *thought* he *might*"—half a guinea for them. I took it very readily, being determined to call for them very soon, and then, if I afterwards wanted, carry them to some less voracious animal of the kind.

"*May* 1.—Still in suspense ; but still resigned. I think of sending Mr. Becket two or three little pieces, large enough for an eighteen-penny pamphlet : but, notwithstanding this, to set about the book I chiefly depend upon. My good broker's money reduced to five

[6] Eustace Budgell drowned himself in the Thames in 1736: the miseries of Otway and Savage are familiar to every reader.

[7] Goldsmith, on his return to England, was so poor that it was with difficulty he was enabled to reach the metropolis with a few halfpence only in his pocket. He was an entire stranger, and without any recommendation. He offered himself to several apothecaries, in the character of a journeyman, but had the mortification to find every application without success. At length he was admitted into the house of a chemist. This example was often in my father's thoughts, as the second volume of this collection will show.

shillings and sixpence, and no immediate prospect of more. I have only to keep up my spirits as well as I can, and depend upon the protection of Providence, which has hitherto helped me in worse situations.

"Let me hope the last day of this month may be a more smiling one than the first. God only knows, and to Him I readily, and not unresignedly, leave it.

"*May* 3.—Mr. Becket has just had my copy. I have *made* about four hundred and fifty lines, and entitled *them* 'Poetical Epistles, with a Preface by the learned Martinus Scriblerus.' I do not say it is chance whether they take or not; it is as God pleases, whatever wits may say to the contrary.

"I this day met an old friend; poor Morley!—not very clean; ill, heavy, and dejected. The poor fellow has had Fortune's smiles and her frowns, and alas, for him! her smiles came first. May I hope a happy prognostic from this. No, I do not, cannot, will not depend upon Fortune.

"N.B. The purse a little recruited, by twenty-five shillings received for books. Now then, when the spirits are tolerable, we 'll pursue our Work, and make hay while the sun shines, for it 's plaguy apt to be clouded.

"*May* 6.—Having nearly finished my plan for one volume, I hope by next week to complete it, and then try my fortune in earnest. Mr. Becket, not yet called upon, has had a pretty long time to deliberate upon my 'Epistles.' If they will do, I shall continue them; London affording ample matter for the smiles as well as frowns of satire.

"Should I have time after my principal business is completed, I don't know whether I shall not write a Novel; those things used to sell, and perhaps will now—but of this hereafter. My spirits are marvellously good, considering I 'm in the middle of the great city, and a stranger, too, without money,—but sometimes we have unaccountable fears, and at other times unaccountable courage.

"*May* 10.—Mr. Becket says just what Mr. Dodsley wrote, 't was a very pretty thing, 'but, sir, these little pieces the town do not regard: it has merit,—perhaps some other may.—'It will be offered to no other, sir!—'Well, sir, I am obliged to you, but,' &c.—and so these little affairs have their end. And are you not disheartened? My dearest Mira, not I! The wanting a letter from you to-day, and the knowing myself to be possessed but of sixpence-farthing in the world, are much more consequential things.

"I have got pretty forward in my book, and shall soon know its fate; if bad, these things will the better prepare me for it; if good, the contrasted fortune will be the more agreeable. We are helped, I 'm persuaded, with spirits in our necessities. I did not, nor could, conceive that, with a very uncertain prospect before me, a very bleak one behind, and a *very* poor one around me, I should be so happy a fellow: I don't think there 's a man in London worth but fourpence-halfpenny—for I 've this moment sent seven farthings for a pint of porter—who is so resigned to his poverty. Hope, Vanity, and the Muse, will certainly contribute something towards a light heart; but Love and the god of Love only can throw a beam of gladness on a heavy one.

"I am now debating whether an Ode or a Song should have the next place in the collection; which being a matter of so great consequence, we 'll bid our Mira good night.

"*May* 12.—Perhaps it is the most difficult thing in the world to tell how far a man's vanity will run away with his passions. I shall therefore not judge, at least not determine, how far my poetical talents may or may not merit applause. For the first time in my life that I recollect, I have written three or four stanzas that so far touched me in the reading them, as to take off the consideration that they were things of my own fancy. Now, if I ever do succeed, I will take particular notice if this passage is remarked; if not, I shall conclude 't was mere self-love,—but if so, 't was the strangest, and, at the same time, strongest disguise she ever put on.

"You shall rarely find the same humour hold two days. I 'm dull and heavy, nor can go on with my work. The head and heart are like children, who, being praised for their good behaviour, will overact themselves; and so is the case with me. Oh! Sally, how I want you!

"*May* 16.—O! my dear Mira, how you distress me: you inquire into my affairs, and love not to be denied,—yet you must. To what purpose should I tell you the particulars of my gloomy situation; that I have parted with my money, sold my *wardrobe*, pawned my watch, am in debt to my landlord, and finally, at some loss how to eat a week longer? Yet you say, tell me all. Ah, my dear Sally, do not desire it; you must not yet be told these things. Appearance is what distresses me: I *must* have dress, and therefore am horribly fearful I shall accompany Fashion with fasting—but a fortnight more will tell me of a certainty.

"*May* 18.—A day of bustle—twenty shillings to pay a tailor, when the stock amounted to thirteen and three-pence. Well,—there were instruments to part with, that fetched no less than eight shillings more; but twenty-one shillings and three-pence would yet be so poor

a superfluity, that the Muse would never visit till the purse was recruited; for, say men what they will, she does not love empty pockets nor poor living. Now, you must know, my watch was mortgaged for less than it ought; so I redeemed and repledged it, which has made me,—the tailor paid and the day's expenses,—at this instant worth (let me count my cash) ten shillings—a rare case, and most bountiful provision of fortune!

"Great God! I thank thee for these happy spirits: seldom they come, but coming, make large amends for preceding gloom.

"I wonder what these people, my Mira, think of me. Here 's Vickery, his wife, two maids, and a shop full of men: the latter, consequently, neither know nor care who I am. A little pretty hawk-eyed girl, I 've a great notion, thinks me a fool, for neglecting the devoirs a lodger is supposed to pay to an attendant in his house: I know but one way to remove the suspicion, and that in the end might tend to confirm it.

"Mrs. Vickery is a clear-sighted woman, who appears to me a good wife, mother, and friend. She thinks me a soft-tempered gentleman—I 'm a gentleman here——not quite nice enough.

"Mr. Vickery is an honest fellow, hasty, and not over distinguishing. He looks upon me as a bookish young man, and so respects me—for he is bookish himself—as one who is not quite settled in the world, nor has much knowledge of it; and as a careless easy-tempered fellow, who never made an observation, nor is ever likely to do so.

"Having thus got my character in the family, my employment remains (I suppose) a secret, and I believe 't is a debate whether I am copying briefs for an attorney, or songs for 'the lady whose picture was found on the pillow t' other day.'

"N.B. We remove to Bishopsgate-street in a day or two. Not an unlucky circumstance; as I shall then, concealing Vickery's name, let my father know only the number of my lodging.

"*May* 20.—The cash, by a sad temptation, greatly reduced. An unlucky book-stall presented to the eyes three volumes of Dryden's works, octavo, five shillings. Prudence, however, got the better of the devil, when she whispered me to bid three shillings and sixpence: after some hesitation, that prevailed with the woman, and I carried reluctantly home, I believe, a fair bargain, but a very ill-judged one.

"It 's the vilest thing in the world to have but one coat. My only one has happened with a mischance, and how to manage it is some difficulty. A confounded stove's modish ornament caught its elbow, and rent it halfway. Pinioned to the side it came home, and I ran deploring to my loft. In the dilemma, it occurred to me to turn tailor myself; but how to get materials to work with puzzled me. At last I went running down in a hurry, with three or four sheets of paper in my hand, and begged for a needle, &c., to sew them together. This finished my job, and but that it is somewhat thicker, the elbow is a good one yet.

"These are foolish things, Mira, to write or speak, and we may laugh at them; but I 'll be bound to say they are much more likely to make a man cry, where they *happen*,—though I was too much of a philosopher for *that*, however not one of those who preferred a ragged coat to a whole one.

"On Monday, I hope to finish my book entirely, and perhaps send it. God Almighty give it a better fate than the trifles tried before!

"Sometimes I think I cannot fail; and then, knowing how often I have thought so of fallible things, I am again despondent. Yet, within these three or four days, I 've been remarkably high in spirits, and now am so, though I 've somewhat exhausted them by writing upwards of thirty pages.

"I am happy in being in the best family you could conceive me to have been led to;—people of real good character and good nature: whose circumstances are affluent above their station, and their manners affable beyond their circumstances. Had I taken a lodging at a different kind of house, I must have been greatly distressed; but now I shall, at all events, not be so before 't is determined, one way or other, what I am to expect.

"I keep too little of the journal form here, for I always think I am writing to you for the evening's post; and, according to custom then, shall bid my dear Sally good night, and ask her prayers.

"*May* 21.—I give you, my dear Miss Elmy, a short abstract of a Sermon, preached this morning by my favourite clergyman, at St. Dunstan's.[8] There is nothing particular in it, but had you heard the good man, reverend in appearance, and with a hollow, slow voice, deliver it—a man who seems as if already half way to Heaven,—you would have joined with me in wondering people call it dull and disagreeable to hear such discourses, and run from them to societies where Deists foolishly blaspheme, or to pantomimes and farces, where men seek to deform the creatures God stamped his own image upon. What, I

[8] The Rev. Thomas Winstanley, of Trinity College, Cambridge, A.M., was appointed rector of St. Dunstan's in the East, in January, 1771,—succeeding the celebrated Dr. Jortin, author of the Life of Erasmus, &c. This eminently respectable clergyman died in February, 1789.

wonder, can Mr. Williams,[9] as a free-thinker, or Mr. Lee Lewis,[10] as a free-speaker, find so entertaining to produce, that their congregations so far exceed those which grace, and yet disgrace, our churches.

"TEXT.—'*For many are called, but few chosen.*'

"Observe, my brethren, that many are called—so many that who can say he is not? Which of you is not called? Where is the man who neither is, nor will be? such neither is nor will be born. The call is universal; it is not confined to this or that sect or country; to this or that class of people: every man shares in this blessed invitation—every man is called. Some by outward, some by inward means: to some, the happy news is proclaimed, to some it is whispered. Some have the word preached to their outward ears; some have it suggested, inwardly, in their hearts. None are omitted in this universal invitation; none shall say, 'I came not, for I was not called.' But take notice—when you have well considered the universality of the call—pondered it, admired, wondered, been lost in contemplation of the bounty; take notice how it is abused—'Few are chosen.' Few! but that, you will say, is in comparison, not in reality; —a sad interpretation! degrading whilst it palliates, still it sounds a lesson to pride;—still I repeat it, 'Few are chosen.' How doubly lessening!—many, yea, all, are called—are invited, are entreated, are pressed to the wedding. Many, yea, all—but a little remnant,—heed not, love not, obey not the invitation. Many are called to the choice of eternal happiness, and yet few will make eternal happiness their choice.

"Brethren, what reasons may be assigned for these things? For the universality of the call? For the limitation of the choice? The reason why all are called, is this: that God is no respecter of persons. Shall any, in the last day, proclaim that the Judge of the whole earth did not right? Shall any plead a want of this call, as a reason why he came not? Shall any be eternally miserable, because he was refused the means of being happy? No; not one. All require this mercy; all have this mercy granted them. From the first man to the last, all are sinners; from the first man to the last, all are invited to be clean; for, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

"The reason why many are called, is, because the mercy of God is not confined, is unspeakable. The reason why so few are chosen, is, because man's depravity is so great, so extensive. The call is God's; the choice is ours;—that we may be happy, is his, of his goodness; that we will not, is our own folly: He wills not that a sinner should die in his sins, but, sinners as we are, we had rather die than part with them. The reason why few are chosen doth not depend upon him who calls, but upon those who are called. Complain not that you want an invitation to heaven, but complain that you want the inclination to obey it. Say not that you cannot go, but that you will not part with the objects which prevent your going.

"Again:—To what are we called? and who are those who obey the call? The last question is to us the most important. Those who obey the call are such as pay respect to it. Those who accept the invitation are such as go like guests. Those who think themselves honoured in the summons will have on their wedding garment; they will put off the filthy robes of their own righteousness, and much more will they put aside the garments spotted with iniquity. They consider themselves as called to faith, to thanksgiving, to justification, to sanctification, and they will, therefore, go in the disposition and temper of men desirous of these immortal benefits; they know that he who had them not—and who, though but one, typifies all the rejected, all the not chosen—they know he was bound hand and foot, and thrust out for that reason: yet, mark you, my fellow sinners! this man went to the wedding, he enrolled himself amongst the guests, he was of the profession, a nominal Christian. How many are there now who are such, deaf to the true end of their calling! who love mercy, but not to use the means of attaining its blessing; who admire the robe of righteousness, but would wear it over the polluted weeds of depravity and hardness of heart.

"But to what are we called? To everlasting happiness! Consider, I implore you, whether it is worth the trouble of looking after. Do by it as by your worldly bargains, which surely do not offer more. Examine the truths it is founded upon; they will bear examination. Try its merits; they will stand the trial. You would grieve to see thousands of saints in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves shut out: and yet, shut out you will be into everlasting darkness, unless you rightly obey the call which you have heard. It is not enough to be called; for that all are. It is not enough to obey the call, for he did so in part who was rejected from the wedding; but to join the practice of religion to the profession of it, is truly to accept the invitation, and will, through our Lord Jesus Christ, entitle you to the mercy to which we are called, even the pleasures which are at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, to whom," &c.

"The foregoing, as near as I remember, was the substance of the good Doctor's discourse. I have doubtless not done him justice in the expressions; those it was impossible for me to retain; but I have preserved, in a great measure, the manner, pathos, and argument. Nor was the sermon much longer, though it took a long time to preach, for here we do not find a discourse run off as if they were the best teachers who say most upon a subject: here they dwell upon a sentence,

[9] About this time, David Williams, originally a dissenting minister in Glamorganshire, published "Lectures on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality," "Apology for professing the Religion of Nature," &c., and attempted to establish a congregation, on the avowed principles of deism, in Margaret-street, Cavendish-square: but this last plan soon failed. He died in 1816.

[10] Charles Lee Lewis, the celebrated comedian, was at this time amusing the town with an evening entertainment of songs and recitations, in the style of Dibdin.

and often repeat it, till it shall hardly fail of making an impression.

"I have this night been drawing out my letter to Lord North. I have diligently read it over, and believe it far the most consequential piece I ever executed, whether in prose or poetry. Its success will soon prove whether it is in the power of my talents to obtain me favour.

"To-morrow, my beloved Sally, I shall transcribe it for you and his Lordship; and if I could suppose you both had the same opinion of its writer, my business were done. You will perceive there is art in it, though art quite consistent with truth—for such is actually the case with me. My last shilling became eight-pence yesterday. The simplicity of the style is, I hope, not lost in endeavouring at the pathetic; and if his Lordship is indeed a literary man, I am not without hope that it may be a means of obtaining for me a better fortune than hitherto has befallen us.

"*May* 22.—I have just now finished my book, and, if I may so say, consecrated it, by begging of Him, who alone can direct all things, to give me success in it, or patience under any disappointment I may meet with from its wanting that. I have good hope from my letter, which I shall probably copy for you to-morrow, for I find I can't to-day. This afternoon I propose to set out for Westminster, and I hope shall not meet with much difficulty in getting the book delivered to his Lordship.—

"—I am now returned from Downing Street, Lord North's place of residence. Every thing at this time becomes consequential. I plagued myself lest I should err in little things—often the causes of a person's doing wrong. The direction of the letter, and the place to call at, puzzled me; I forgot his Lordship's name, and had no Court Calendar. See how trifles perplex us! However, my book is safely delivered, and I shall call again on Wednesday, when I hope to be told something.

"I know not how totally to banish hope, and yet can't encourage it. What a day will to-morrow be to me! a day of dread and expectation. Ah, dear Mira, my hopes are flying; I see now my attempt in its darkest side—twice, nay, three times unsuccessful in a month I have been here—once in my application to the person advertising, and twice in the refusal of booksellers. God help me, my Sally, I have but a cowardly heart, yet I bear up as well as I can; and if I had another shilling would get something to-night to keep these gloomy thoughts at bay, but I must save what I have, in hopes of having a letter to pay for to-morrow. How, let me suppose, shall I be received? The very worst I can possibly guess will be to have my book returned by the servant, and no message; next to this a civil refusal. More than these I dare not dwell upon; and yet these alone are uncomfortable things.

"O! what pains do we take, what anxiety do we feel, in our pursuit of worldly good—how reproachful a comparison does it make to our more important business! When was I thus solicitous for the truly valuable riches? O my God! forgive a creature who is frailty itself—who is lost in his own vileness and littleness: who would be happy, and knows not the means. My God, direct me!

"*May* 23.—Here follows, my dearest Sally, a copy of my letter. I am in tolerable spirits this morning, but my whole night has been spent in waking and sleeping visions, in ideas of the coming good or evil; names, by the way, we learn early to misplace. Sometimes I have dwelt upon all my old views and romantic expectations; have run from disappointment to disappointment; and such as the past has been, so, said I, shall be the future. Then my vanity has told fairer things, and magnified my little talents, till I supposed they must be thought worthy of notice. So that from fear to flattery, and from hope to anxiety, I passed a varied and unquiet night. To-day I am at least more composed, and will give you the letter promised."

* * * *

[Some leaves are here torn out.]

* * * *

"Like some poor bark on the rough ocean tost,
My rudder broken, and my compass lost,
My sails the coarsest, and too thin to last,
Pelted by rains, and bare to many a blast,
My anchor, Hope, scarce fix'd enough to stay
Where the strong current Grief sweeps all away,
I sail along, unknowing how to steer,
Where quicksands lie and frowning rocks appear.
Life's ocean teems with foes to my frail bark,
The rapid sword-fish, and the rav'ning shark,
Where torpid things crawl forth in splendid shell,
And knaves and fools and sycophants live well.
What have I left in such tempestuous sea?
No Tritons shield, no Naiads shelter me!
A gloomy Muse, in Mira's absence, hears
My plaintive prayer, and sheds consoling tears—
Some fairer prospect, though at distance, brings,
Soothes me with song, and flatters as she sings."

* * * *

"*June* 5.—Heaven and its Host witness to me that my soul is conscious of its own demerit, I deserve nothing. I do nothing but what is worthy reproof. I expect nothing from what is nearest in my thoughts or actions to virtue. All fall short of it; much, very much, flies from it.

"I make no comparison with the children

of men. It matters not to me who is vile or who is virtuous. What I am is all to me; and I am nothing but in my dependence.

"O! Thou, who searchest all hearts, who givest, and who hast given, more than I deserve, or can deserve—who withholdest punishment, and proclaimest pardon—form my desires, that Thou mayest approve them, and approving gratify. My present, O! forgive and pity, and as it seemeth good to Thee, so be it done unto me."

"*June* 6.—I will now, my dearest Mira, give you my letter to Lord Shelburne, but cannot recollect an exact copy, as I altered much of it, and I believe, in point of expression, for the better. I want not, I know, your best wishes; those and her prayers my Mira gives me. God will give us peace, my love, in his time: pray chiefly that we may acquiesce in his righteous determinations.

"*To the Right Honourable the Earl of Shelburne.*

"Ah! SHELBURNE, blest with all that 's good or great,
T' adorn a rich, or save a sinking state,
If public Ills engross not all thy care,
Let private Woe assail a patriot's ear,
Pity confined, but not less warm, impart,
And unresisted win thy noble heart:
Nor deem I rob thy soul of Britain's share,
Because I hope to have some interest there;
Still wilt thou shine on all a fostering sun,
Though with more fav'ring beams enlight'ning one,—
As Heaven will oft make some more amply blest,
Yet still in general bounty feeds the rest.
Oh hear the Virtue thou reverest plead;
She 'll swell thy breast, and there applaud the deed.
She bids thy thoughts one hour from greatness stray,
And leads thee on to fame a shorter way;
Where, if no withering laurel's thy reward,
There 's shouting Conscience, and a grateful Bard;
A bard untrained in all but misery's school,
Who never bribed a knave or praised a fool;—
'T is Glory prompts, and as thou read'st attend,
She dictates pity, and becomes my friend;
She bids each cold and dull reflection flee,
And yields her Shelburne to distress and me!—

"Forgive, my Lord, a free, and perhaps, unusual address; misfortune has in it, I hope, some excuse for presumption. Your Lordship will not, cannot, be greatly displeased with an unfortunate man, whose wants are the most urgent; who wants a friend to assist him, and bread.

"I will not tire your Lordship with a recital of the various circumstances which have led to this situation. It would be too long a tale; though there are parts in it which, I will venture to assure your Lordship, would not only affect your compassion, but, I hope, engage your approbation. It is too dull a view of the progression from pleasing, though moderate expectation, to unavoidable penury.

"Your Lordship will pardon me the relation of a late and unsuccessful attempt to become useful to myself and the community I live in. Starving as an apothecary, in a little venal borough in Suffolk, it was there suggested to me that Lord North, the present minister, was a man of that liberal disposition, that I might hope success from a representation of my particular circumstances to him. This I have done, and laid before his Lordship. I confess a dull, but a faithful account of my misfortunes. My request had bounds the most moderate. I asked not to feed upon the spoils of my country, but by an honest diligence and industry to earn the bread I needed. The most pressing part of my prayer entreated of his Lordship his speedy determination, as my little stock of money was exhausted, and I was reduced to live in misery and on credit.

"Why I complain of his Lordship is not that he denied this, though an humble and moderate petition, but for his cruel and unkind delay. My Lord, you will pardon me a resentment expressed in one of the little pieces I have taken the liberty of enclosing, when your Lordship considers the inhumanity I was treated with: my repeated prayers for my sentence were put off by a delay; and at length a lingering refusal, brought me by an insolent domestic, determined my suit, and my opinion of his Lordship's private virtues.

"My Lord, I now turn to your Lordship, and entreat to be heard. I am ignorant what to ask, but feel forcibly my wants—Patronage and Bread. I have no other claim on your Lordship than my necessities, but they are great, unless my Muse, and she has, I am afraid, as few charms; nor is it a time for such to flourish: in serener days, my Lord, I have produced some poetical compositions the public might approve, and your Lordship not disdain to patronise. I would not, my Lord, be vain farther than necessity warrants, and I pray your Lordship to pardon me this. May I not hope it will occur to you how I may be useful? My heart is humbled to all but villainy, and would live, if honestly, in any situation. Your lordship has my fortune in your power, and I will, with respect and submission, await your determination. I am, my Lord, &c. &c."

"—You see, my dear Mira, to what our situation here may reduce us. Yet am I not conscious of losing the dignity becoming a man: some respect is due to the superiority of station; and that I will always pay, but I cannot flatter or fawn, nor shall my humblest request be so presented. If respect will not do, adulation shall not; but I hope it will; as I 'm sure he must have a poor idea of greatness, who delights in a supple knee bending to him, or a tongue voluble in paltry praise, which conscience says is totally undeserved. One of the poetical pieces I sent to Lord Shelburne you have no copy of, and I will therefore give it you here.

"*An Epistle to a Friend.*

"Why, true, thou say'st the fools at Court denied,
Growl vengeance,—and then take the other side:
The unfed flatterer borrows satire's power,
As sweets unshelter'd run to vapid sour.
But thou, the counsel to my closest thought,
Beheld'st it ne'er in fulsome stanzas wrought.
The Muse I caught ne'er fawn'd on venal souls,
Whom suppliants angle, and poor praise controls;
She, yet unskill'd in all but fancy's dream,
Sang to the woods, and Mira was her theme.

But when she sees a titled nothing stand
The ready cipher of a trembling land,—
Not of that simple kind that placed alone
Are useless, harmless things, and threaten none,—
But those which, join'd to figures, well express
A strengthen'd tribe that amplify distress,
Grow in proportion to their number great,
And help each other in the ranks of state;—
When this and more the pensive Muses see,
They leave the vales and willing nymphs to thee;
To Court on wings of agile anger speed,
And paint to freedom's sons each guileful deed.
Hence rascals teach the virtues they detest,
And fright base action from sin's wavering breast;
For though the knave may scorn the Muse's arts,
Her sting may haply pierce more timid hearts.
Some, though they wish it, are not steel'd enough,
Nor is each would-be villain conscience-proof.

"And what, my friend, is left my song besides?
No school-day wealth that roll'd in silver tides,
No dreams of hope that won my early will,
Nor love, that pain'd in temporary thrill;
No gold to deck my pleasure-scorn'd abode,
No friend to whisper peace,—to give me food;—
Poor to the World I 'd yet not live in vain,
But show its lords their hearts, and my disdain.

"Yet shall not Satire all my song engage
In indiscriminate and idle rage;
True praise, where Virtue prompts, shall gild each line,
And long—if Vanity deceives not—shine.
For though in harsher strains, the strains of woe,
And undorn'd, my heart-felt murmurs flow,
Yet time shall be when this thine humbled friend
Shall to more lofty heights his notes extend.
A Man—for other title were too poor—
Such as 't were almost virtue to adore,
He shall the ill that loads my heart exhale,
As the sun vapours from the dew-pressed vale;
Himself uninjuring shall new warmth infuse;
And call to blossom every want-nipp'd Muse.
Then shall my grateful strains his ear rejoice,
His name harmonious thrill'd on Mira's voice;
Round the reviving bays new sweets shall spring,
And SHELBURNE's fame through laughing valleys ring."

"Pay me, dear, for this long morning's work, with your patience, and, if you can, your approbation. I suppose we shall have nothing more of this riot in the city, and I hope now to entertain you with better things. God knows, and we will be happy that it is not the work of accident. Something will happen, and perhaps now. Angels guide and bless you!

"*June* 8.—Yesterday, my own business being decided, I was at Westminster at about three o'clock in the afternoon, and saw the members go to the House. The mob stopped many persons, but let all whom I saw pass, excepting Lord Sandwich, whom they treated roughly, broke his coach windows, cut his face, and turned him back. A guard of horse and foot were immediately sent for, who did no particular service, the mob increasing and defeating them.

"I left Westminster when all the members, that were permitted, had entered the House and came home. In my way I met a resolute band of vile-looking fellows, ragged, dirty, and insolent, armed with clubs, going to join their companions. I since learned that there were eight or ten of these bodies in different parts of the City.

"About seven o'clock in the evening I went out again. At Westminster the mob were few, and those quiet, and decent in appearance. I crossed St. George's Fields, which were empty, and came home again by Blackfriars Bridge; and in going from thence to the Exchange, you pass the Old Bailey; and here it was that I saw the first scene of terror and riot ever presented to me. The new prison was a very large, strong, and beautiful building, having two wings, of which you can suppose the extent, when you consider their use; besides these, were the keeper's (Mr. Akerman's) house, a strong intermediate work, and likewise other parts, of which I can give you no description. Akerman had in his custody four prisoners, taken in the riot; these the mob went to his house and demanded. He begged he might send to the sheriff, but this was not permitted. How he escaped, or where he is gone, I know not; but just at the time I speak of they set fire to his house, broke in, and threw every piece of furniture they could find into the street, firing them also in an instant. The engines came, but were only suffered to preserve the private houses near the prison.

"As I was standing near the spot, there approached another body of men, I suppose 500, and Lord George Gordon in a coach, drawn by the mob towards Alderman Bull's, bowing as he passed along. He is a lively-looking young man in appearance, and nothing more, though just now the reigning hero.

"By eight o'clock, Akerman's house was in flames. I went close to it, and never saw any thing so dreadful. The prison was, as I said, a remarkably strong building; but, determined to force it, they broke the gates with crows and other instruments, and climbed up the outside of the cell part, which joins the two great wings of the building, where the felons were confined; and I stood where I plainly saw their operations. They broke the roof, tore away the rafters, and having got ladders they descended. Not Orpheus himself had more courage or better luck; flames all around them, and a body of soldiers expected, they defied and laughed at all opposition.

"The prisoners escaped. I stood and saw about twelve women and eight men ascend from their confinement to the open air, and they were conducted through the street in their chains. Three of these were to be hanged on Friday. You have no conception of the phrensy of the multitude. This being

done, and Akerman's house now a mere shell of brickwork, they kept a store of flame there for other purposes. It became red-hot, and the doors and windows appeared like the entrance to so many volcanoes. With some difficulty they then fired the debtor's prison—broke the doors—and they, too, all made their escape.

"Tired of the scene, I went home, and returned again at eleven o'clock at night. I met large bodies of horse and foot soldiers coming to guard the Bank, and some houses of Roman Catholics near it. Newgate was at this time open to all; any one might get in, and, what was never the case before, any one might get out. I did both; for the people were now chiefly lookers on. The mischief was done, and the doers of it gone to another part of the town.

"But I must not omit what struck me most. About ten or twelve of the mob getting to the top of the debtors' prison, whilst it was burning, to halloo, they appeared rolled in black smoke mixed with sudden bursts of fire—like Milton's infernals, who were as familiar with flame as with each other. On comparing notes with my neighbours, I find I saw but a small part of the mischief. They say Lord Mansfield's house is now in flames."

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[Some leaves are here torn out.]

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"*June* 11.—Sunday.—As I 'm afraid my ever dearest friend, my Mira, has not a preacher so affecting as my worthy rector, I shall not scruple to give his morning discourse in the way I have abstracted those before; and I know my dear Sally will pardon, will be pleased with, the trouble I give her."

* * * *

With a short abstract of a sermon on the text "Awake, thou that sleepest," which I do not think it necessary to transcribe, the "Poet's Journal," as I have it, abruptly concludes. But my father kept, while resident in the City, another note-book, solely for himself, from which I consider it due to his memory—in order to complete the reader's impression of his character and conduct at this, the most melancholy period of his life—to make a very few extracts.

I.

"O gracious Redeemer! fill me, I beseech thee, with Divine love; let me, O my Saviour! set my affections on thee and things above; take from me this over-carefulness and anxiety after the affairs of this mortal body, and deeply impress on my thoughts the care of my immortal soul. Let me love thee, blessed Lord! desire thee, and embrace thy cross when it is offered me. Set before me the value of eternal happiness, and the true worth of human expectations.

"O! detach my heart from self-pleasing, from vanity, and all the busy passions that draw me from thee. Fix it on thy love; let it be my joy to contemplate thy condescension and thy kindness to man; may gratitude to my Redeemer wean me from inclination for his foes; may it draw me from the objects of the world, the dreams of the senses, and all the power and temptation of the Devil and his angels.

"Remember me, Lord, at thy table; behold I desire to be with thee: O be thou with me! If thou art absent, I cannot receive comfort even there; if thou art with me, I cannot miss it. The treasures of eternal life are thine; O Lord! give me of those treasures; give me a foretaste of thy pleasures, that I may look more indifferently upon the earth and its enjoyments. Lord! where are thy old loving-kindnesses? Forgive me, most gracious Saviour; and restore me to thy favour. O give me the light of thy countenance, and I shall be whole. Amen!"

II.

"O, my Lord God, I will plead my cause before thee, let me not be condemned; behold, I desire to be thine. O, cast me not away from thee. My sins are great, and often repeated. They are a burthen to me, I sink under them; Lord, save me, or I perish. Hold out thine hand; my faith trembles; Lord, save me ere I sink.

"I am afflicted in mind, in body, in estate; Oh! be thou be my refuge! I look unto thee for help, from whence all help cometh; I cast off all dependence on the world or mine own endeavours: thou art my God, and I will trust in thee alone.

"O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst deliver us from darkness and the shadow of death, illuminate, enlighten me; comfort me, O Lord, for I go mourning. O be thou with me, and I shall live. Behold, I trust in thee, Lord, forsake me not. Amen."

III.

"I look back on myself,—myself, an ample field of speculation for me. I see there the infant, the child, and all the rapid progress of human life; the swifter progress of sin and folly, that came with every new day, but did not like the day depart to return no more.

"If I die to-morrow—and it may be my lot—shall I not have cause to wish my death had happened at a former period? at a time when I felt strong hope and lively faith? and what inference will the wish lead me to draw,—a wish for stronger hope and livelier faith, an ardent prayer and due repentance? If not, my wishes will be my torment. Never again to be cheered with the comforts of divine grace, how sad! to be totally forsaken of it, how tremendous!

"But I speak of to-morrow, why may it not be to-day? why not now?—this instant, I ask my heart the question, it may cease to beat. The thunderbolt may be spent on my head. The thunderbolt, did I say? O the importance of a worm's destruction! A little artery may burst; a small vital chord drop its office; an invisible organ

grow dormant in the brain, and all is over—all over with the clay, and with the immortal all to come.

"Of the ten thousand vital vessels, the minute, intricate network of tender-framed machinery, how long have they wrought without destroying the machine! How many parts necessary to being, how long held in motion! Our hours are miracles: shall we say that miracles cease, when, by being, we are marvellous? No, I should not think the summons wonderful; nor partial, for younger have been summoned; nor cruel, for I have abused mercy; nor tyrannical, for I am a creature, a vessel in the hands of the potter: neither am I without conviction that, if it be better for me to live another day, I shall not die this.

"But what of awe, of fear, in such a call? where is he who *then* thinks not—if he has permission to think—solemnly? God his Judge, and God his Redeemer; Terror visible, and Mercy slighted, are then to be heard:—the moment at hand that brings heaven, or hell! where is an opiate for the soul that wakes *then*?

"O thou blessed Lord, who openedst the gate of life, let me live in true faith, in holy hope: and let not my end surprise me! Ten thousand thoughts disturb my soul: be, thou greatest and fairest among ten thousand,—be thou with me, O my Saviour! Return! return! and bring me hope!"

IV.

"Amid the errors of the best, how shall my soul find safety? Even by thee, O Lord! Where is unlettered Hope to cast her anchor? Even in thy blessed Gospel! Serious examination, deep humility, earnest prayer, will obtain certainty.

"God is good. Christ is our only Mediator and Advocate. He suffered for our sins. By his stripes we are healed. As in Adam all die, so in Christ all are made alive. Whoso believeth shall be saved. But faith without works is dead. Yet it is the grace of God that worketh in us. Every good and every perfect work cometh from above. Man can do nothing of himself; but Christ is all in all; and, Whatsoever things ye shall ask in the name of Jesus, shall be granted. This is sufficient, this is plain; I ask no philosophic researches, no learned definitions; I want not to dispute, but to be saved. Lord! save me, or I perish. I only know my own vileness; I only know thy sufficiency; these are enough; witness Heaven and Earth, my trust is in God's mercy, through Jesus Christ, my blessed Redeemer. Amen!"

V.

"My God, my God, I put my trust in thee; my troubles increase, my soul is dismayed, I am heavy and in distress; all day long I call upon thee: O be thou my helper in the needful time of trouble.

"Why art thou so far from me, O my Lord? why hidest thou thy face? I am cast down, I am in poverty and in affliction: be thou with me, O my God; let me not be wholly forsaken, O my Redeemer!

"Behold, I trust in thee, blessed Lord. Guide me, and govern me unto the end. O Lord, my salvation, be thou ever with me. Amen."

CHAPTER IV.

1781.

Mr. Crabbe's Letter to Burke, and its Consequences—The Publication of "The Library"—He is domesticated at Beaconsfield—Takes Orders—Is appointed Curate at Aldborough.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Crabbe's Journal does not extend over more than three months of the miserable year that he spent in the City. During the whole of that time he experienced nothing but disappointments and repulses. His circumstances were now, indeed, fearfully critical: absolute want stared him in the face: a gaol seemed the only immediate refuge for his head; and the best he could hope for was, dismissing all his dreams of literary distinction, to find the means of daily bread in the capacity of a druggist's assistant. To borrow, without any prospect of repaying, was what his honesty shrunk from; to beg was misery, and promised, moreover, to be fruitless. A spirit less manly and less religious must have sunk altogether under such an accumulation of sorrows.

Mr. Crabbe made one effort more. In his "sketch," he says: "He did not so far mistake as to believe that any name can give lasting reputation to an undeserving work; but he was fully persuaded, that it must be some very meritorious and extraordinary performance, such as he had not the vanity to suppose himself capable of producing, that would become popular, without the introductory *probat* of some well-known and distinguished character. Thus thinking, and having now his first serious attempt nearly completed, afraid of venturing without a guide, doubtful whom to select, knowing many by reputation, none personally—he fixed, impelled by some propitious influence, in some happy moment, upon Edmund Burke—one of the first of Englishmen, and, in the capacity and energy of his mind, one of the greatest of human beings."

The letter which the young poet addressed to Burke must have been seen by Mr. Prior, when he composed his Life of the great statesman; but that work had been published for nine years before any of Mr. Crabbe's family were aware that a copy of it had been preserved; nor had they any exact knowledge of the extremity of distress which this remarkable letter describes, until the hand that penned it was in the grave. It is as follows:—

"*To Edmund Burke, Esq.*

"Sir,—I am sensible that I need even your talents to apologise for the freedom I now take; but I have a plea which, however simply urged, will, with a mind like yours, Sir, procure me pardon: I am one of those outcasts on the world who are without a friend, without employment, and without bread.

"Pardon me a short preface. I had a partial father, who gave me a better education than his broken fortune would have allowed; and a better than was necessary, as he could give me that only. I was designed for the profession of physic; but not having wherewithal to complete the requisite studies, the design but served to convince me of a parent's affection, and the error it had occasioned. In April last, I came to London, with three pounds, and flattered myself this would be sufficient to supply me with the common necessaries of life, till my abilities should procure me more; of these I had the highest opinion, and a poetical vanity contributed to my delusion. I knew little of the world, and had read books only: I wrote, and fancied perfection in my compositions; when I wanted bread they promised me affluence, and soothed me with dreams of reputation, whilst my appearance subjected me to contempt.

"Time, reflection, and want, have shown me my mistake. I see my trifles in that which I think the true light; and whilst I deem them such, have yet the opinion that holds them superior to the common run of poetical publications.

"I had some knowledge of the late Mr. Nassau, the brother of Lord Rochford; in consequence of which I asked his Lordship's permission to inscribe my little work to him. Knowing it to be free from all political allusions and personal abuse, it was no very material point to me to whom it was dedicated. His Lordship thought it none to him, and obligingly consented to my request.

"I was told that a subscription would be the more profitable method for me, and therefore, endeavoured to circulate copies of the enclosed Proposals.

"I am afraid, Sir, I disgust you with this very dull narration, but believe me punished in the misery that occasions it. You will, conclude, that, during this time, I must have been at more expense than I could afford; indeed, the most parsimonious could not have avoided it. The printer deceived me, and my little business has had every delay. The people with whom I live perceive my situation, and find me to be indigent and without friends. About ten days since, I was compelled to give a note for seven pounds, to avoid an arrest for about double that sum which I owe. I wrote to every friend I had, but my friends are poor likewise; the time of payment approached, and I ventured to represent my case to Lord Rochford. I begged to be credited for this sum till I received it of my subscribers, which I believe will be within one month: but to this letter I had no reply, and I have probably offended by my importunity. Having used every honest means in vain, I yesterday confessed my inability, and obtained, with much entreaty, and as the greatest favour, a week's forbearance, when I am positively told, that I must pay the money, or prepare for a prison.

"You will guess the purpose of so long an introduction. I appeal to you, Sir, as a good and, let me add, a great man. I have no other pretensions to your favour than that I am an unhappy one. It is not easy to support the thoughts of confinement; and I am coward enough to dread such an end to my suspense.

"Can you, Sir, in any degree, aid me with propriety?—Will you ask any demonstrations of my veracity? I have imposed upon myself, but I have been guilty of no other imposition. Let me, if possible, interest your compassion. I know those of rank and fortune are teased with frequent petitions, and are compelled to refuse the requests even of those whom they know to be in distress: it is, therefore, with a distant hope I venture to solicit such favour; but you will forgive me, Sir, if you do not think proper to relieve. It is impossible that sentiments like yours can proceed from any but a humane and generous heart.

"I will call upon you, Sir, to-morrow, and if I have not the happiness to obtain credit with you, I must submit to my fate. My existence is a pain to myself, and every one near and dear to me are distressed in my distresses. My connections, once the source of happiness, now embitter the reverse of my fortune, and I have only to hope a speedy end to a life so unpromisingly begun: in which (though it ought not to be boasted of) I can reap some consolation from looking to the end of it. I am, Sir, with the greatest respect, your obedient and most humble servant,

"GEORGE CRABBE."

Mr. Burke was, at this period (1781), engaged in the hottest turmoils of parliamentary opposition, and his own pecuniary circumstances were by no means very affluent: yet he gave instant attention to this letter, and the verses which it enclosed. He immediately appointed an hour for my father to call upon him at his house in London; and the short interview that ensued, entirely, and for ever, changed the nature of his worldly fortunes. He was, in the common phrase, "a made man" from that hour. He went into Mr. Burke's room, a poor young adventurer, spurned by the opulent, and rejected by the publishers, his last shilling gone, and all but his last hope with it: he came out virtually secure of almost all the good fortune that, by successive steps, afterwards fell to his lot—his genius acknowledged by one whose verdict could not be questioned—his character and manners appreciated and approved by a noble and capacious heart, whose benevolence knew no limits but its power—that of a giant in intellect, who was, in feeling, an unsophisticated child—a bright example of the close affinity between superlative talents and the warmth of the generous affections. Mr. Crabbe had afterwards many other friends, kind, liberal, and powerful, who assisted him in his professional career; but it was one hand alone that rescued him when he was *sinking*. In reflecting upon the consequences of the letter to Burke—the happiness, the exultation, the inestimable benefits that resulted to my father, ascribing, indeed, my own existence to that great and good man's condescension and prompt kindness—I may be pardoned for dwelling upon that interview with feelings of gratitude which I should but in vain endeavour to express.

But sensible as I am of the importance of

Mr. Burke's interference in my father's behalf, I would not imply that there was not ample desert to call it forth. Enlarged as was Mr. Burke's benevolence, had not the writings which were submitted to his inspection possessed the marks of real genius, the applicant would probably have been dismissed with a little pecuniary assistance. I must add that, even had his poems been evidently meritorious, it is not to be supposed that the author would have at once excited the strongest personal interest in such a mind, unless he had, during this interview, exhibited the traits of a pure and worthy character. Nay, had there appeared any offensive peculiarities of manner and address — either presumption or meanness—though the young poet might have received both kindness and patronage, can any one dream that Mr. Burke would have at once taken up his cause with the zeal of a friend, domesticated him under his own roof, and treated him like a son? In mentioning his new *protégé*, a few days afterwards, to Reynolds, Burke said, "He has the mind and feelings of a gentleman." Sir Joshua told this, years later, to my grateful father himself. The autobiographical sketch thus continues the narrative of this providential turn in his affairs:—

"To Mr. Burke, the young man, with timidity, indeed, but with the strong and buoyant expectation of inexperience, submitted a large quantity of miscellaneous compositions, on a variety of subjects, which he was soon taught to appreciate at their proper value: yet such was the feeling and tenderness of his judge, that in the very act of condemnation, something was found for praise. Mr. Crabbe had sometimes the satisfaction of hearing, when the verses were bad, that the thoughts deserved better; and that if he had the common faults of inexperienced writers, he had frequently the merit of thinking for himself. Among those compositions, were two poems of somewhat a superior kind,—'The Library' and 'The Village:' these were selected by Mr. Burke: and with the benefit of his judgment, and the comfort of his encouraging and exhilarating predictions, Mr. Crabbe was desired to learn the duty of sitting in judgment upon his best efforts, and without mercy rejecting the rest. When all was done that his abilities permitted, and when Mr. Burke had patiently waited the progress of improvement in the man whom he conceived to be capable of it, he himself took 'The Library' to Mr. Dodsley, then of Pall-Mall, and gave many lines the advantage of his own reading and comments. Mr. Dodsley listened with all the respect due to the reader of the verses, and all the apparent desire to be pleased that could be wished by the writer; and he was as obliging in his reply as, in the very nature of things, a bookseller can be supposed to be towards a young candidate for poetical reputation:—'He had declined the venturing upon anything himself: there was no judging of the probability of success. The taste of the town was exceedingly capricious and uncertain. He paid the greatest respect to Mr. Burke's opinion that the verses were good, and he did in part think so himself: but he declined the hazard of publication; yet would do all he could for Mr. Crabbe, and take care that his poem should have all the benefit he could give it.'

"The worthy man was mindful of his engagement: he became even solicitous for the success of the work; and no doubt its speedy circulation was in some degree caused by his exertions. This he did; and he did more;—though by no means insensible of the value of money, he gave to the author his profits as a publisher and vender of the pamphlet; and Mr. Crabbe has seized every occasion which has offered to make acknowledgment for such disinterested conduct, at a period when it was more particularly acceptable and beneficial. The success of 'The Library' gave some reputation to the author, and was the occasion of his second poem, 'The Village,' which was corrected, and a considerable portion of it written, in the house of his excellent friend, whose own activity and energy of mind would not permit a young man under his protection to cease from labour, and whose judgment directed that labour to its most useful attainments.

"The exertions of this excellent friend in favour of a young writer were not confined to one mode of affording assistance. Mr. Crabbe was encouraged to lay open his views, past and present; to display whatever reading and acquirements he possessed: to explain the causes of his disappointments and the cloudiness of his prospects; in short, he concealed nothing from a friend so able to guide inexperience, and so willing to pardon inadvertency. He was invited to Beaconsfield, the seat of his protector, and was there placed in a convenient apartment, supplied with books for his information and amusement, and made a member of a family whom it was honour as well as pleasure to become in any degree associated with. If Mr. Crabbe, noticed by such a man, and received into such a family, should have given way to some emotions of vanity, and supposed there must have been merit on one part, as well as benevolence on the other, he has no slight plea to offer for his frailty,—especially as we conceive it may be added, that his vanity never at any time extinguished any portion of his gratitude; and that it has ever been his delight to think, as well as his pride to speak, of Mr. Burke as his father, guide, and friend; nor did that gentleman ever disallow the name to which his conduct gave sanction and propriety."

It was in the course of one of their walks amidst the classical shades of Beaconsfield, that Burke, after some conversation on general literature, suggested by a passage of the Georgics, which he had happened to quote on observing something that was going on in his favourite farm, passed to a more minute inquiry into my father's early days in Suffolk than he had before made, and drew from him the avowal that, with respect to future affairs, he felt a strong partiality for the church. "It is most fortunate," said Mr. Burke, "that your father exerted himself to send you to that second school; without a little Latin we should have made nothing of you:

now, I think we shall succeed." The fund of general knowledge which my father gradually showed in these rambles, much surprised his patron. "Mr. Crabbe," he said early to Sir Joshua Reynolds, "appears to know something of everything." Burke himself was a strong advocate for storing the mind with multiform knowledge, rather than confining it to one narrow line of study; and he often remarked, that there was no profession in which diversity of information was more useful, and, indeed, necessary, than that of a clergyman. Having gone through the form—for it was surely little more—of making proper inquiries as to the impression left of Mr. Crabbe's character in his native place—Mr. Burke, though well aware of the difficulties of obtaining holy orders for any person not regularly educated, exerted himself to procure the assent, in this instance, of Dr. Yonge, the then Bishop of Norwich; and in this, backed by the favourable representations of Mr. Dudley North and Mr. Charles Long, he was eventually successful.

Meantime, nothing could be more cordial than the kindness with which my father was uniformly treated at Beaconsfield. Let no one say that ambition chills the heart to other feelings. This obscure young writer could contribute in nothing to the reputation of a statesman and orator, at the very apex of influence and renown; yet never had he been so affectionately received as when, a pennyless dependant, he first entered the hall of that beautiful mansion; and, during the whole of his stay, he was cheered by a constancy of kind and polite attention, such as I fear to describe, lest I should be suspected of fond exaggeration. As a trivial specimen of the conduct of the lady of the house, I may mention, that, one day, some company of rank that had been expected to dinner did not arrive, and the servants, in consequence, reserved for next day some costly dish that had been ordered. Mrs. Burke happened to ask for it; and the butler saying, "It had been kept back, as the company did not come"—she answered, "What! is not Mr. Crabbe here? let it be brought up immediately." It is not always that ladies enter so warmly into the feelings of their husbands on occasions of this sort. Mrs. Burke and her niece were afterwards indefatigable in promoting the sale of "The Library," both by letters and by personal application.

My father was introduced, while under this happy roof, to Mr. Fox, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and many others of Mr. Burke's distinguished friends, who, like himself, encouraged the young adventurer with approbation: and for Sir Joshua, in particular, he conceived a warm and grateful attachment, which subsequent experience only confirmed. When Mr. Burke's family returned to London for the winter, my father accompanied them; and, it being inconvenient for them to afford him an apartment at that time in their town house, he took lodgings in its neighbourhood. He, however, continued to dine commonly at Mr. Burke's table, and was introduced by him to several of the clubs of which he was a member, and gradually, I believe, to all those of his friends who took any interest in literature. But it was at Sir Joshua's table that he first had the honour of meeting Dr. Johnson; and I much regret that so little is in my power to tell of their intercourse. My father, however, said, that, at this first interview, he was particularly unfortunate: making some trite remark, or hazarding some injudicious question, he brought on himself a specimen of that castigation which the great literary bashaw was commonly so ready to administer. He remembered with half comic terror the Doctor's *growl;* but this did not diminish Mr. Crabbe's respect and veneration for the Doctor, nor did his *mal-à-propos*, on the other hand, prevent Johnson from giving him a most courteous reception, when, at Burke's suggestion, he some days afterwards called on him in Bolt Court. He then expressed no little interest in his visiter's success; and proved his sincerity by the attention with which he subsequently read and revised "The Village." Had I contemplated this narrative somewhat earlier, and led my father, with a view to it, to converse on the great men he met with at this time of his life, I might, no doubt, have obtained some curious information. But, in truth, he had neither the turn nor much of the talent for the retention of conversations; and even what he did remember, he was not always disposed to communicate. One maxim of Johnson's, however, had made a strong impression on him: "Never fear putting the strongest and best things you can think of into the mouth of your speaker, whatever may be his condition."[1]

When "The Library" was published, the opinion of Burke had its effect upon the conductors of the various periodical works of the time; the poet received commendatory *critiques* from the very gentlemen who had hitherto treated him with such contemptuous coldness; and though his name was not in the title-page, it was universally known.

Burke rejoiced in the success of his *protégé;* but, promising as the young author's prospects now appeared to be, the profits of so small a poem could not have been considerable; and his being accustomed to appear at such tables as those of Mr. Burke and Sir Joshua Reynolds, implied a certain degree of expense in articles of dress, so that, his modesty preventing him from stating his exact case to his ever-generous patron, —while the patron on his part, having conferred such substantial benefits, had too much delicacy

[1] I owe this to the recollection of my father's friend, Miss Hoare, of Hampstead.

to make him feel dependent for alms,—my father was at this time occasionally reduced to distress for an immediate supply of money. In an interval of something like his former misery,—at all events, of painful perplexity,—he received a note from the Lord Chancellor, politely inviting him to breakfast the next morning. His kind patron had spoken of him in favourable terms to the stern and formidable Thurlow, and his Lordship was now anxious to atone for his previous neglect. He received Mr. Crabbe with more than courtesy, and most condescendingly said, "The first poem you sent me, Sir, I ought to have noticed—and I heartily forgive the second." They breakfasted together, and, at parting, his Lordship put a sealed paper into my father's hand, saying, "Accept this trifle, Sir, in the meantime, and rely on my embracing an early opportunity to serve you more substantially when I hear that you are in orders." As soon as he had left the house he opened the letter, expecting to find a present of ten, or perhaps twenty pounds: it contained a bank note for a *hundred*: a supply which effectually relieved him from all his present difficulties, while his new patron's accompanying promise must have eased him of any apprehensions which might yet haunt his mind as to his future prospects in the world.

I am enabled to state—though the information never came from my father—that the first use he made of this good fortune was, to seek out and relieve some objects of real indigence—poor scholars like himself, whom he had known when sharing their wretchedness in the City: and I must add, that whenever he visited London in later years, he made it his business to inquire after similar objects of charity, supposed to be of respectable personal character, and to do by them as, in his own hour of distress, he would have been done by. But who knew better than he, that the metropolis has always abundance of such objects, if any one would search for them? or who,—I may safely appeal to all that knew him,—ever sacrificed time and trouble in the cause of benevolence, throughout every varying scene of his life, more freely than Mr. Crabbe? No wonder it was his first thought, on finding himself in possession of even a very slender fund, to testify his thankfulness to that Being who had rescued himself from the extreme of destitution, and to begin as early as possible to pay the debt he owed to misfortune.

Mr. Crabbe, having passed a very creditable examination, was admitted to deacon's orders, in London, on the 21st December, by the Bishop of Norwich; who ordained him a priest in August of the year following, in his own cathedral. Being licensed as curate to the Rev. Mr. Bennett, rector of Aldborough, he immediately bade a grateful adieu to his illustrious patron and his other eminent benefactors—not forgetting his kind and hospitable friends in Cornhill—and went down to take up his residence once more in his native place.

The feelings with which he now returned to Aldborough may easily be imagined. He must have been more than man had he not exulted at the change. He left his home a deserter from his profession, with the imputation of having failed in it from wanting even common abilities for the discharge of its duties—in the estimation of the ruder natives, who had witnessed his manual awkwardness in the seafaring pursuits of the place, "a lubber," and "a fool;" perhaps considered even by those who recognised something of his literary talent, as a hare-brained visionary, never destined to settle to anything with steadiness and sober resolution; on all hands convicted certainly of the "crime of poverty," and dismissed from view as a destitute and hopeless outcast. He returned, a man of acknowledged talents; a successful author, patronised and befriended by some of the leading characters in the kingdom; and a clergyman with every prospect of preferment in the church. His father had the candour to admit, that he had underrated his poetical abilities, and that he had acted judiciously in trusting to the bent of nature, rather than persevering in an occupation for which he was, from the outset, peculiarly disqualified. The old man now gloried in the boldness of his adventure, and was proud of its success: he fondly transcribed "The Library" with his own hand; and, in short, reaped the reward of his own early exertions to give his son a better education than his circumstances could well afford.

On the state of mind with which the young clergyman now revisited Parham—on the beautiful and retributive conclusion thus afforded to the period of resignation and humble trust recorded in his "Journal to Mira,"—I shall not attempt to comment. In the esteem of his ever encouraging and confiding friend there, he could not stand higher now than he had done when all the the rest of the world despaired of or disowned him; but, with the hospitality and kindness he had long experienced from her relations, there was now mingled a respect to which he had previously been a stranger. He heard no more taunts about that "d——d learning."

On his first entrance, however, into his father's house, at this time, his joyous feelings had to undergo a painful revulsion. That affectionate parent, who would have lost all sense of sickness and suffering, had she witnessed his success, was no more: she had sunk under the dropsy, in his absence, with a fortitude of resignation closely resembling that of his own last hours. It happened that a friend and neighbour was slowly yielding at the same time to the same hopeless disorder, and every morning she used to desire her daughter to see if this sufferer's window was opened; saying, cheerfully, "she must make

haste, or I shall be at rest before her." My father has alluded to his feelings on this occasion in the "Parish Register:"—

> "Arrived at home, how then he gazed around
> On every place where she no more was found;
> The seat at table she was wont to fill,
> The fireside chair, still set, but vacant still;
> The Sunday pew she fill'd with all her race,
> Each place of hers was now a sacred place."

And I find him recurring to the same theme in one of his manuscript pieces:—

> "But oh! in after-years
> Were other deaths that call'd for other tears:—
> No, that I dare not, that I cannot paint!
> The patient sufferer! the enduring saint!
> Holy and cheerful!—but all words are faint!"

Mr. Crabbe's early religious impressions were, no doubt, strongly influenced by those of his mother; and she was, as I have already said, a deeply devout woman; but her seriousness was not of the kind that now almost exclusively receives that designation. Among persons of her class, at least, at that period, there was a general impression that the doctrinal creed ought rather to be considered the affair of the pastor than of the humble and unlearned members of his flock—that the former would be held responsible for the tenets he inculcated—the latter for the practical observance of those rules of conduct and temper which good men of all persuasions alike advocate and desire to exemplify. The controversial spirit, in a word, lighted up by Whitfield and Wesley, had not as yet reached the coast of Suffolk. Persons turned through misfortune, sickness, or any other exciting cause, to think with seriousness of securing their salvation, were used to say to themselves, "I must amend and correct whatever in my life and conversation does offend the eyes of my Heavenly Father; I must henceforth be diligent in my duties, search out and oppose the evil in my heart, and cultivate virtuous dispositions and devout affections." Not from their own strength, however, did they hope and expect such improvement: they sought it from, and ascribed it to, "Him from whom all good counsels and works do proceed," and admitted, without hesitation, that their own best services could be made acceptable only through the merits of their Redeemer. Thus far such persons accorded with the more serious of a later period; but the subtle distinction between good works as necessary and yet not conditional to salvation, and others of a like kind, particularly prevalent afterwards, were not then familiar; nor was it at all common to believe, that Christians ought to renounce this world, in any other sense than that of renouncing its wickedness, or that they are called upon to shun any thing but the excessive indulgence in amusements and recreations not in themselves palpably evil.

Such was the religion of Mrs. Crabbe; and, doubtless, her mildness, humility, patient endurance of afflictions and sufferings, meek habits, and devout spirit, strongly recommended her example to her son, and impressed his young mind with a deep belief that the principles which led to such practice must be those of the Scriptures of God.

It is true that neither the precepts nor the example of his mother were able altogether to preserve Mr. Crabbe from the snares that beset, with peculiar strength, young men early removed from the paternal roof. The juvenile apprentice is, in many respects, too much his own master; and though my father, in his first service, escaped with no worse injury than the association with idle lads generally brings with it, yet, in his second apprenticeship, and afterwards, in the beginning of his own practice at Aldborough, he did not scruple to confess that he was not always proof against the temptations of a town. Where

> "High in the street, o'erlooking all the place,
> The rampant lion shows his kingly face"—

the Aldborough Boniface of the present day shows, I am told, with no little exultation, an old-fashioned room, the usual scene of convivial meetings, not always remarkable for "measured merriment," in which the young *doctor* had his share. It seems probable that the seriousness and purity of his early impressions had, for a season, been smothered: but they were never obliterated; and I believe I do not err in tracing to the severe illness which befell him not long after he had commenced as surgeon at Aldborough, their revival and confirmation—a strong and a permanent change. On his recovery from an affliction, during which he had felt that life hung by a thread, he told his children that he made a solemn resolution against all deliberate evil; and those who observed him after that period all concur in stating his conduct and conversation to have been that of a regular, temperate, and religious young man.

When his sister and he kept house apart from the rest of the family, it was their invariable practice to read a portion of the Scriptures together every evening; and even while struggling with the difficulties of his medical occupation, poetry was not the only literary diversion he indulged in. His early note-books now before me, contain proofs that he was in the habit of composing sermons, in imitation of Tillotson, long before he could have had the least surmise that he was ever to be a preacher. Indeed, the "Journal to Mira" contains such evidence of the purity of his conduct, and of the habitual attention he paid to religious topics, that I need not enlarge further upon the subject. He certainly was not guilty of rushing into the service of the altar without having done his endeavour

to discipline himself for a due discharge of its awful obligations, by cultivating the virtues of Christianity in his heart, and, in as far as his opportunities extended, making himself fit to minister to the spiritual necessities of others. But I am bound to add, that in a later period of life, and more especially during the last ten years of it, he became more conscious of the importance of dwelling on the doctrines as well as the practice of Christianity, than he had been when he first took orders; and when a selection of his Sermons is placed, as I hope it ere long will be, before the public, it will be seen that he had gradually approached, in substantial matters, though not exactly in certain peculiar ways of expression, to that respected body usually denominated Evangelical Christians of the Church of England; with whom, nevertheless, he was never classed by others, nor, indeed, by himself.

And what, it will naturally be asked, was his reception by the people of Aldborough, when he re-appeared among them in this new character? "The prophet is not without honour, save in his own country:"—this Scriptural proverb was entirely exemplified here. The whisper ran through the town, that a man who had failed in one calling, was not very likely to make a great figure in a new one. Others revived, most unjustly, old stories, in which my father did not appear with quite clerical decorum: and others again bruited about a most groundless rumour that he had been, when in London, a preacher among the Methodists. For this last report there was, indeed, no foundation at all, except that an Aldborough sailor, happening one day to enter Mr. Wesley's chapel at Moorfields, had perceived my father, who had gone thither, like himself, from pure curiosity, standing on the steps of the pulpit; the place being so crowded that he could find no more convenient situation. But perhaps the most common, as well as unworthy, of all the rumours afloat, was, that he had been spoiled by the notice of fine folks in town, and would now be too proud to be bearable among his old equals. When I asked him how he felt when he entered the pulpit at Aldborough, for the first time, he answered, "I had been unkindly received in the place—I saw unfriendly countenances about me, and, I am sorry to say, I had too much indignation, though mingled, I hope, with better feelings, to care what they thought of me or my sermon." Perhaps, as he himself remarked, all this may have been well ordered for my father. Had there been nothing to operate as an antidote, the circumstances of his altered position in life might have tempted human infirmity, even in him, to a vain-glorious self-esteem.

He appears to have ere long signified some uneasiness of feeling to the Lord Chancellor, whose very kind answer concluded in these words:—"I can form no opinion of your present situation or prospects, still less upon the agreeableness of it; but you may imagine that I wish you well, and, if you make yourself capable of preferment, that I shall try to find an early opportunity of serving you. I am, with great regard, dear Sir, your faithful friend and servant, THURLOW."

CHAPTER V.

1782—1783.

Mr. Crabbe's Appointment as domestic Chaplain to the Duke of Rutland—Removes to Belvoir Castle—Publication of "The Village."

MY father continued to be curate at Aldborough for only a few months, during which his sister resumed the charge of his domestic affairs, in a small lodging apart from the rest of the family. His brother Robert, a man in many respects closely resembling himself, of strong faculties and amiable disposition, was now settled at Southwold; but the two brothers, much attached to each other's society, made a point of meeting one evening of each week at Blythborough, about half way between their places of residence. I need hardly add, that my father passed also a considerable part of his time under the same roof with Miss Elmy, who still prudently resisted every proposition of immediate marriage, being resolved not to take such a step until her lover should have reached some position less precarious than that of a mere curate.

Most persons who had done as much for one in my father's situation as Mr. Burke had already accomplished, would, no doubt, have been disposed to say, or to think, "Now, young man, help yourself:" but it was far otherwise with Mr. Crabbe's illustrious benefactor. He was anxious to see his *protégé* raised as high as his friendship could elevate him; and he soon was the means of placing him in a station such as has, in numerous instances, led to the first dignities of the church. My father received a letter from Mr. Burke, informing him that, in consequence of some conversation he had held with the Duke of Rutland, that nobleman would willingly receive him as his domestic chaplain at Belvoir Castle, so soon as he could get rid of his existing engagements at Aldborough. This was a very unusual occurrence, such situations in the mansions of that rank being commonly filled either by relations of the noble family itself, or by college acquaintances, or dependants recommended by political service and local attachment. But, in spite of political difference, the recommendation of Burke was all-powerful with the late Duke of Rutland, the son of the great Marquis of Granby; for this nobleman, though not what is usually called a literary man, had a strong partiality for letters, a refined taste

for the arts, and felt that a young author of such genius as Burke had imputed to my father would be a valuable acquisition to the society of his mansion, where, like a genuine English peer of the old school, he spent the greater portion of his time in the exercise of boundless hospitality and benevolence. My father did not hesitate, of course, to accept the offered situation; and, having taken farewell for a season of his friends at Parham, he once more quitted Aldborough, but not now in the hold of a sloop, nor with those gloomy fears and trembling anticipations which had agitated his mind on a former occasion. He was now morally sure of being, within no long interval, placed in a situation that would enable him to have a house of his own and to settle for life in the enjoyment of at least a moderate competency.

What his hopes exactly amounted to when this change took place, or what apprehensions chequered them when he approached Belvoir, or what were his impressions on his first reception there, are questions which I never ventured to ask of him. It would have been highly interesting, certainly, to have his remarks on what now befell him at the opening of so new a scene of life, recorded in another "Journal to Mira;" but none such has been discovered. He always seemed to shrink from going into oral details on the subject. The numberless allusions to the nature of a literary dependant's existence in a great lord's house, which occur in my father's writings, and especially in the tale of "The Patron," are, however, quite enough to lead any one who knew his character and feelings to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the kindness and condescension of the Duke and Duchess themselves—which were, I believe, uniform, and of which he always spoke with gratitude—the situation he filled at Belvoir was attended with many painful circumstances, and productive in his mind of some of the acutest sensations of wounded pride that have ever been traced by any pen.

The Duchess[1] was then the most celebrated beauty in England; and the fascinating grace of her manners made the due impression on my father. The Duke himself was a generous man, "cordial, frank, and free;" and highly popular with all classes. His establishments of race-horses, hunters, and hounds were extensive, because it was then held a part of such a nobleman's duty that they should be so; but these things were rather for the enjoyment of his friends than for his own. He was sufficiently interested in such recreations to join in them occasionally; but he would frequently dismiss a splendid party from his gates, and himself ride, accompanied only by Mr. Crabbe, to some sequestered part of his domain, to converse on literary topics, quote verses, and criticise plays. Their Graces' children were at this period still in the nursery.

The immediate chiefs of the place, then, were all that my father could have desired to find them; but their guests, and, above all, perhaps, their servants, might not always treat him with equal respect. I must add, that although the state at the castle was by no means more strict than is usual in great establishments—and certainly not marked by the princely dignity and grandeur that have distinguished Belvoir in our own day—yet it could not but have been oppressive to a person of Mr. Crabbe's education and disposition. He might not, I can well believe, catch readily the manners appropriate to his station,—his tact was not of that description,—and he ever had an ardent passion for personal liberty, inconsistent with enjoyment under the constraint of ceremony. With great pleasure, then, did he always hear of the preparations for removing to Cheveley, about the periods of the Newmarket races; for all there was freedom and ease; that house was small, the servants few, and the habits domestic. There was another occasion, also, on which ceremony was given to the winds—when the family resorted to Croxton Park (a small seat near Belvoir), to fish in the extensive ponds, &c. These times of relaxation contrasted delightfully with the etiquette at the castle. After more than usual ceremony, or more abundant conviviality, I have heard him speak of the relief and pleasure of wandering through the deep glades and secluded paths of the woods, catching beetles, moths, butterflies, and collecting mosses, lichens, or other botanical specimens; for this employment carried his imagination to those walks in which he had wandered so frequently with his best friend, his chosen companion; and he already longed for the period when he could call a country parsonage his own: nay, he was sometimes tempted to wish to exchange his station for a much more humble dwelling, and in this mood he once composed some verses, which I have heard him repeat, acknowledging they were not of the most brilliant description:—

> "Oh! had I but a little hut,
> That I might hide my head in;
> Where never guest might dare molest
> Unwelcome or unbidden.
> I 'd take the jokes of other folks,
> And mine should then succeed 'em,
> Nor would I chide a little pride,
> Or heed a little freedom." &c. &c.

Such lines might easily run from the pen from which came, in after-days—

> "Strive not too much for favour—seem at ease,
> And rather pleased thyself, than bent to please.
> Upon thy lord with decent care attend;
> Be not too near—thou canst not be a friend: . . .

[1] Lady Mary-Isabella Somerset, daughter of the fourth Duke of Beaufort. She died in 1831.

"When ladies sing, or in thy presence play,
Do not, dear John, in rapture melt away:
'T is not thy part; there will be listeners round
To cry divine, and doat upon the sound:
Remember, too, that though the poor have ears,
They take not in the music of the spheres."

I have heard my father mention but few occurrences in this period of his life; and if I had, the privacy of a family is not to be invaded because of its public station. But one incident I cannot forbear to mention, as it marked a trait in the Duke's mind peculiarly pleasing—his strong affection for his brother, Lord Robert Manners, who died of wounds received in leading his Majesty's ship Resolution against the enemy's line, in the West Indies, on the memorable 12th of April, 1782. Some short time previous to his Lordship's death, his hat, perforated with balls, was sent at the Duke's request to Belvoir Castle. The Duke first held it up with a shout of exultation and triumph—glorying in the bravery of his beloved brother; and then, as the thought of his danger flashed suddenly into his mind, sank on his chair in a burst of natural and irrepressible feeling.

Mr. Crabbe was particularly attached to the unfortunate Mr. Robert Thoroton, a relative of the family, who generally resided at the Castle. He was, it is true, a man of pleasure, and of the world, but distinguished by warm, frank-hearted kindness, and ever evinced a particular predilection to my father. He was remarked, even in the Belvoir hunt, for intrepid boldness, and once spurred his horse up the steep terraces to the castle-walls—a mad feat! Nor was he much less rash when, as my father one day (in an unusual fit of juvenile merriment) was pursuing him, he sprang over the boundary of the glacis—a steep and formidable precipice. He afterwards accompanied the Duke to Ireland, and is mentioned in the singular work of Sir Jonah Barrington. After the Duke's death, he was involved in difficulties; and, under the maddening sufferings of an incurable disorder, he terminated his existence. Among the public characters of that time, the visiters at Belvoir who paid the most attention to Mr. Crabbe were the Duke of Queensberry, the Marquis of Lothian, Dr. Watson the celebrated Bishop of Llandaff, and Dr. Glynn.

A few months after Lord Robert's death, my father accompanied his Grace for a few days to London, and went with him to the studio of the royal academician Stothard, where he consoled his sorrow by giving directions for the painting of the beautiful picture from which the well-known print of the melancholy event is engraved. It seems to have been on this occasion that he received the following letter—

From Mr. Burke.

"Dear Sir,—I do not know by what unlucky accident you missed the note I left for you at my house. I wrote besides to you at Belvoir. If you had received these two short letters, you could not want an invitation to a place where every one considers himself as infinitely honoured and pleased by your presence.

"Mrs. Burke desires her best compliments, and trusts that you will not let the holidays pass over without a visit from you. I have got the poem; but I have not yet opened it. I don't like the unhappy language you use about these matters. You do not easily please such a judgment as your own—that is natural; but where you are difficult every one else will be charmed. I am, my dear sir, ever most affectionately yours,

"Edmund Burke."

By the time the family left Belvoir for the London season, my father had nearly completed for the press his poem of "The Village," the conclusion of which had been suggested by the untimely death of Lord Robert Manners. Through Sir Joshua Reynolds, he transmitted it to Dr. Johnson, whose kindness was such that he revised it carefully, and whose opinion of its merits was expressed in a note which, though it has often been printed, I must allow myself the gratification of transcribing here.

Dr. Johnson to Sir Joshua Reynolds.

"March 4, 1783.

"Sir,—I have sent you back Mr. Crabbe's poem, which I read with great delight. It is original, vigorous, and elegant. The alterations which I have made I do not require him to adopt; for my lines are, perhaps, not often better than his own: but he may take mine and his own together, and, perhaps, between them, produce something better than either. He is not to think his copy wantonly defaced: a wet sponge will wash all the red lines away, and leave the pages clean. His dedication will be least liked: it were better to contract it into a short sprightly address. I do not doubt of Mr. Crabbe's success. I am, sir, your most humble servant, "Samuel Johnson."

Boswell says, "The sentiments of Mr. Crabbe's admirable poem, as to the false notions of rustic happiness and rustic virtue, were quite congenial with Dr. Johnson's own; and he took the trouble not only to suggest slight corrections and variations, but to furnish some lines, when he thought he could give the writer's meaning better than in the words of the manuscript. I shall give an instance, marking the original by Roman, and Johnson's substitution in *Italic* characters:"

"'In fairer scenes, where peaceful pleasures spring,
Tityrus the pride of Mantuan swains might sing;
But, charmed by him, or smitten with his views,
Shall modern poets court the Mantuan muse?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Fancy leads, or Virgil led the way?'

"'*On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,*
If Tityrus found the golden age again,

Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanick echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?'"

"Here," says Boswell, "we find Dr. Johnson's poetical and critical powers undiminished. I must, however, observe, that the aids he gave to this poem, as to 'The Traveller' and 'Deserted Village' of Goldsmith, were so small, as by no means to impair the distinguished merit of the author."[1] Mr. Boswell ought to have added, that the six lines he quotes formed the only passage in the poem that was not *in substance* quite the author's own. The manuscript was also again submitted to the inspection of Mr. Burke; and he proposed one or two trivial alterations, which my father's grateful feelings induced him to adopt, although they did not appear to himself *improvements*. There were not wanting, I have heard, *friends* in Suffolk, who, when "The Village" came out, whispered that "the manuscript had been so *cobbled* by Burke and Johnson, that Crabbe did not know it again when it was returned to him." If these kind persons survived to read "The Parish Register," their amiable conjectures must have received a sufficient rebuke.

"The Village" was published in May, 1783; and its success exceeded the author's utmost expectations. It was praised in the leading journals; the sale was rapid and extensive; and my father's reputation was, by universal consent, greatly raised, and permanently established by this poem. "The Library," and "The Village," are sufficient evidence of the care and zeal with which the young poet had studied Pope; and, without doubt, he had gradually, though in part perhaps unconsciously, formed his own style mainly on that polished model. But even those early works, and especially "The Village," fairly entitled Mr. Crabbe to a place far above the "mechanick echoes" of the British Virgil. Both poems are framed on a regular and classical plan,—perhaps, in that respect, they may be considered more complete and faultless than any of his later pieces; and though it is only here and there that they exhibit that rare union of force and minuteness for which the author was afterwards so highly distinguished, yet such traces of that marked and extraordinary peculiarity appeared in detached places—above all, in the description of the Parish Workhouse in "The Village"—that it is no wonder the new poet should at once have been hailed as a genius of no slender pretensions.

The sudden popularity of "The Village" must have produced, after the numberless slights and disappointments already mentioned, and even after the tolerable success of "The Library," about as strong a revulsion in my father's mind as a ducal chaplaincy in his circumstances; but there was no change in his temper or manners. The successful author continued as modest as the rejected candidate for publication had been patient and long-suffering.

No sleeping apartment being vacant at the Duke of Rutland's residence in Arlington Street, Mr. Crabbe accidentally procured the very rooms shortly before occupied by the highly talented, but rash and miserable Hackman, the infatuated admirer and assassin of the beautiful mistress of the Earl of Sandwich. Here he again found himself in that distinguished society into which Mr. Burke had introduced him. He now very frequently passed his mornings at the easel of Sir Joshua Reynolds, conversing on a variety of subjects, while this distinguished artist was employed upon that celebrated painting the Infant Hercules,[2] then preparing for the Empress of Russia.

I heard him speak of no public character of that time (except Mr. Burke) with that warmth of feeling with which he regarded Sir Joshua. I have no doubt but that, in some respects, there was a similarity of character—an enlarged mind, and the love of ease and freedom, were common to both; but it is probable that those qualities also prepossessed my father greatly in his favour which he himself did *not* possess. Sir Joshua was never apparently discomposed by anything under the sun—under all circumstances, and at all times, he was ever the same cheerful, mild companion, the same perfect gentleman—happy, serene, and undisturbed. My father spoke with particular pleasure of one day passed at that house, when his Grace of Rutland and a select company dined there—Miss Palmer the great artist's niece, afterwards Marchioness of Thomond, presiding. The union of complete, and even homely, comfort and ease with perfect polish and the highest manners, had in it a charm which impressed the day especially on his memory.

It was now considered desirable that Mr. Crabbe, as the chaplain to a nobleman, should have a university degree; and the Bishop of Llandaff (Dr. Watson) very kindly entered his name on the boards of Trinity College, Cambridge, that he might have the privilege of a degree, after a certain number of terms, and without residence.

This arrangement, however, had hardly been made, when he received an invitation to dine with Lord Thurlow; and this is another of those incidents in his life, which I much regret that he himself has given no account of; for I should suppose many expressions characteristic of the rough old Chancellor might have been re-

[1] Croker's Boswell, vol. v. p. 55.

[2] Sir Joshua mentioned that this was his fourth painting on the same canvass.

corded. My father only said, that, before he left the house, his noble host, telling him, that, "by G—d, he was as like Parson Adams as twelve to a dozen," gave him the small livings of Frome St. Quintin, and Evershot, in Dorsetshire; and Mr. Crabbe, that he might be entitled to hold this preferment, immediately obtained the degree of LL.B. from the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Moore), instead of waiting for it at Cambridge.

In the autumn of 1783, after a long absence, my father went to Suffolk; and Miss Elmy being then at Beccles with her mother, he bent his steps thither; and it was in one of their rides in that neighbourhood, that they had the good fortune to view the great and memorable meteor which appeared in the month of August in that year. At that moment my mother and he were returning, in the evening, over a wide open common near Beccles. It was late, dull, and cloudy: in an instant the dark mass opened just in front of them. The clouds were rolled back like a scroll; and the glorious phenomenon burst forth as large as the moon, but infinitely more brilliant; majestically sailed across the heavens, varying its form every instant, and, as it were, unfolding its substance in successive sheaths of fire, and scattering lesser meteors, as it moved along. My mother, who happened to be riding behind, said that, even at that awful moment (for she concluded that the end of all things was at hand), she was irresistibly struck with my father's attitude. He had raised himself from his horse, lifted his arm, and spread his hand towards the object of admiration and terror, and appeared transfixed with astonishment.

Mr. Crabbe returned from thence to Belvoir, and again went to London with the family at the latter end of the year. Being now in circumstances which enabled him to afford himself a view of those spectacles which he had hitherto abstained from, and with persons who invited him to accompany them, he went occasionally to the theatres, especially to see Mrs. Siddons. Of her talents he expressed, of course, the most unbounded admiration; but I have heard him also speak of Mrs. Abingdon and Mrs. Jordan (the latter especially, in the character of Sir Harry Wildair), in such terms as proved that he fully appreciated the exquisite grace, and then unrivalled excellency, of those comic actresses. Being one night introduced by Mr. Thoroton into the box of the Prince of Wales's equerries, his royal highness inquired, with some displeasure, who he was that had so intruded there; but hearing it was the poetical chaplain of his friend the Duke of Rutland, he expressed himself satisfied, and a short time after, Mr. Crabbe was presented to his royal highness by his noble patron.

Before the end of the year 1783, it was fixed that his Grace of Rutland should soon be appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Had the Chancellor's livings, which Mr. Crabbe held, been of any considerable value, he would no doubt have embraced this opportunity to retire and settle; but the income derived from them was very trifling, and, as it happened, no preferment on the Belvoir list was then vacant; and therefore, when it was decided that he should remain on this side the Channel and marry, the Duke very obligingly invited him to make the castle his home, till something permanent could be arranged. At parting, the Duke presented him with a portrait of Pope, by Sir Godfrey Kneller, and assured him it was his intention to place him in an eligible situation on the first opportunity. He little thought at that time (his Grace being by but a few months his senior) that he should never see his kind and noble patron again.

By some it has been thought remarkable that Mr. Crabbe, recommended to the Duke of Rutland by such a character as Mr. Burke, and afterwards by his own reputation and conduct, should not have accompanied his Grace to Dublin, and finally been installed in a dignitary's seat in some Irish cathedral. Whether he had the offer of proceeding to Ireland I do not know; but it would have been extremely inconsistent with his strong attachment to Miss Elmy, and his domestic disposition and habits, to have accepted it; and his irregular education was an effectual bar to any very high preferment in the church. That he should not desire to retain his chaplaincy, was not only to be attributed to his wish to settle, but his consciousness that he was by no means calculated to hold such an office. In fact, neither nature nor circumstances had qualified him for it. The aristocracy of genius approaches too near the aristocracy of station: superiority of talent is apt, without intention, to betray occasional presumption. It is true, subserviency would be always despised; but a cool, collected mind—never thrown off its guard—pleased with what passes—entering into the interests of the day, but never betrayed into enthusiasm,—is an indispensable qualification for that station. Mr. Crabbe could never conceal his feelings, and he felt strongly. He was not a stoic, and freedom of living was prevalent in almost all large establishments of that period; and, when the conversation was interesting, he might not always retire as early as prudence might suggest; nor, perhaps, did he at all times put a bridle to his tongue, for he might feel the riches of his intellect more than the poverty of his station. It is also probable that, brought up in the warehouse of Slaughden, and among the uneducated, though nature had given him the disposition of a gentleman—the politeness of a mild and Christian spirit—he may at that early period have retained some repulsive

marks of the degree from whence he had so lately risen; he could hardly have acquired all at once the ease and self-possession for which he was afterwards distinguished. I must also add, that although he owed his introduction to Burke, his adherence, however mild, to the Whig tenets of Burke's party may not have much gratified the circles of Belvoir.

These circumstances will easily account for his not accompanying the family into Ireland, without supposing the least neglect or unkindness in his patrons, or any insensibility on their part to his sterling merits: on the contrary, he never ceased to receive from every individual of that noble house the strongest testimonies of their regard; and he was not only most amply satisfied with the favours they had conferred, but felt a strong personal attachment to the members of the family of both generations.

A few weeks before the Duke embarked for Ireland, my father once more repaired to Suffolk, and hastened to Beccles with the grateful intelligence that he was at length entitled, without imprudence, to claim the long-pledged hand of Miss Elmy.

CHAPTER VI.

1784—1792.

Mr. Crabbe marries—He resides successively at Belvoir Castle, at his Curacy of Stathern, and at his Rectory of Muston—Increase of his Family—Publication of "The Newspaper"—Visits and Journeys—His mode of Life, Occupations, and Amusements.

In the month of December, 1783, my father and mother were married in the church of Beccles, by the Rev. Peter Routh, father to the learned and venerable president of Magdalen College, Oxford. Shortly after, they took up their residence in the apartments destined for their use, at Belvoir Castle; but, although there were many obvious advantages to a couple of narrow income in this position, and although the noble owner of the seat had given the most strict orders that their convenience should be consulted in every possible manner by his servants, it was soon found to be a disagreeable thing to inhabit the house, and be attended by the domestics, of an absent family; and Mr. Crabbe, before a year and a half had elapsed, took the neighbouring curacy of Stathern, and transferred himself to the humble parsonage attached to that office, in the village of the same name. A child born to my parents, while still at Belvoir, survived but a few hours; their next, the writer of these pages, saw the light at Stathern, in November, 1785. They continued to reside in this obscure parsonage for four years; during which two more children were added to their household,—John Crabbe, so long the affectionate and unwearied assistant of his father in his latter days (born in 1787),—and a daughter (born in 1789), who died in infancy.

Of these four years, my father often said they were, on the whole, the very happiest in his life. My mother and he could now ramble together at their ease, amidst the rich woods of Belvoir, without any of the painful feelings which had before chequered his enjoyment of the place: at home, a garden afforded him healthful exercise and unfailing amusement; and his situation as a curate prevented him from being drawn into any sort of unpleasant disputes with the villagers about him. His great resource and employment was, I believe, from the first, the study of natural history: he cultivated botany, especially that of the grasses, with insatiable ardour. Entomology was another especial favourite; and he gradually made himself expert in some branches of geological science also. He copied with his own hand several expensive works on such subjects, of which his situation could only permit him to obtain a temporary loan; and, though manual dexterity was never his forte, he even drew and coloured after the prints in some of these books with tolerable success: but this sort of labour, he, after a little while, discontinued, as an unprofitable waste of time. I may also add, that, in accordance with the usual habits of the clergy then resident in the vale of Belvoir, he made some efforts to become a sportsman; but he wanted precision of eye and hand to use the gun with success. As to coursing, the cry of the first hare he saw killed, struck him as so like the wail of an infant, that he turned heart-sick from the spot: and, in a word, although Mr. Crabbe did, for a season, make his appearance now and then in a garb which none that knew him in his latter days could ever have suspected him of assuming, the velveteen jacket and all its appurtenances were soon laid aside for ever.

He had another employment, which, indeed, he never laid aside until, many years after this time, he became the rector of a populous *town*. At Stathern, and at all his successive country residences, my father continued to practise his original profession among such poor people as chose to solicit his aid. The contents of his medicine chest, and, among the rest, cordials, were ever at their service: he grudged no personal fatigue to attend the sick-bed of the peasant, in the double capacity of physician and priest; and had often great difficulty in circumscribing his practice strictly within the limits of the poor, for the farmers would willingly have been attended gratis also. On some occasions, he was obliged to act even as accoucheur. I cannot quit this matter without observing, that I have heard it said, by persons who had met my father in humble abodes of distress, that, however nature might have disqualified him for the art of a surgeon, he exhibited a sagacity

which, under better circumstances, might have conducted him to no mean rank as a physician.

In the course of 1784, my father contributed a brief memoir of Lord Robert Manners to the Annual Register, published by his friend, Mr. Dodsley; and in 1785 he appeared again as a poet. "The Newspaper," then published, was considered as in all respects of the same class and merits with "The Library;" and the author was anew encouraged by the critics, and by the opinions of Mr. Burke and others of his eminent friends in London. Yet, successful as his poetical career had been, and highly flattering as was the reception which his works had procured him in the polished circles of life, if we except a valueless sermon put forth on the death of his patron, the Duke of Rutland, in 1787, and a chapter on the Natural History of the Vale of Belvoir, which he contributed to Mr. Nichols's account of Leicestershire, shortly afterwards, he, from this time, withdrew entirely from the public view. His "Parish Register" was published at the interval of *twenty-two years* after "The Newspaper;" and, from his thirty-first year to his fifty-second, he buried himself completely in the obscurity of domestic and village life, hardly catching, from time to time, a single glimpse of the brilliant society in which he had for a season been welcomed, and gradually forgotten as a *living* author by the public, who only, generally speaking, continued to be acquainted with the name of Crabbe from the extended circulation of certain striking passages in his early poems, through their admission into "The Elegant Extracts." It might, under such circumstances, excite little surprise, if I should skip hastily over the whole interval from 1785 to 1807—or even down to my father's sixtieth year (1813), when he at last reappeared in the metropolis, and figured as a member of various literary institutions there, and among the *lions*, as they are called, of fashionable life;—but I feel that, in doing so, I should be guilty of a grave omission; and I hope the son of such a father will be pardoned for desiring to dwell a little on him as he appeared in those relations which are the especial test of moral worth—which, if well sustained, can impart a brightness to the highest intellectual reputation, and which dwell on my memory as affording the most estimable traits of his character.

Not long after his marriage, in passing through London, on his way to visit his livings in Dorsetshire, he had the satisfaction of presenting his wife to Mr. and Mrs. Burke, when he and she experienced the kindest reception; but this was only a casual glimpse of his illustrious friend. I believe my father offered him the dedication of "The Newspaper," as well as of some of his earlier publications; but that great man, probably from modesty, declined anything of this kind; and as for Dr. Johnson, who, no doubt, must have been the next in his view, that giant of literature was by this time lost to the world. In Dorsetshire, they were hospitably received by Mr. Baker, once a candidate for that county; and they returned charmed with their excursion, yet resumed with undiminished zest the enjoyment of their own quiet little parsonage.

Never, indeed, was any man more fitted for domestic life than my father; and, but for circumstances not under his control—especially the delicate state of health into which my mother ere long declined—I am sure no man would have enjoyed a larger share of every sort of domestic happiness. His attachment to his family was boundless; but his contentment under a long temporary oblivion may also, in great part, be accounted for, by the unwearied activity of his mind. As the chief characteristic of his heart was benevolence, so that of his mind was a buoyant exuberance of thought and perpetual exercise of intellect. Thus he had an inexhaustible resource within himself, and never for a moment, I may say, suffered under that *ennui* which drives so many from solitude to the busy search for notoriety. I can safely assert, that, from the earliest time I recollect him, down to the fifth or sixth year before his death, I never saw him (unless in company) seated in a chair, enjoying what is called a lounge—that is to say, doing nothing. Out of doors he had always some object in view—a flower, or a pebble, or his note-book, in his hand; and in the house, if he was not writing, he was reading. He read aloud very often, even when walking, or seated by the side of his wife, in the huge old fashioned one-horse chaise, heavier than a modern chariot, in which they usually were conveyed in their little excursions, and the conduct of which he, from awkwardness and absence of mind, prudently relinquished to my mother on all occasions. Some may be surprised to hear me speak of his writing so much; but the fact is, that though he for so many years made no fresh appeal to the public voice, he was all that time busily engaged in composition. Numberless were the manuscripts which he completed; and not a few of them were never destined to see the light. I can well remember more than one grand incremation—not in the chimney, for the bulk of paper to be consumed would have endangered the house—but in the open air—and with what glee his children vied in assisting him, stirring up the fire, and bringing him fresh loads of the fuel as fast as their little legs would enable them. What the various works thus destroyed treated of, I cannot tell; but among them was an Essay on Botany in English; which, after he had made great progress in it, my father laid aside, in consequence merely, I believe, of the remonstrances of the late Mr. Davies, vice-master of Trinity College, Cambridge, with whom he had become casually

acquainted, and who, though little tinged with academical peculiarities, could not stomach the notion of degrading such a science by treating of it in a modern language.

My father used to say that, had this treatise come out at the time when his friend arrested its progress, he might perhaps have had the honour of being considered as the first discoverer of more than one addition to the British Flora, since those days introduced to notice, classed and named, by other naturalists. I remember his mentioning, as one instance, the humble trefoil, now known as the *Trifolium suffocatum*. But, even if Mr. Crabbe had sent no "Parish Register" before him, when he, after his long retirement, reappeared in the upper walks of life, there would have been no possibility of suspecting that his village existence had been one of intellectual torpor. He mixed, on that occasion, with a much wider circle than that to which Burke introduced him; and it was obvious to the few who could compare what he then was with what he had been on his first *début*, that all his social feelings had been quickened, all his mental powers expanded and strengthened, in the interval that had passed. Why, such being the case, he for so great a period of his life remained unmoved by the stimuli of reputation or money, or the pleasure of select society, is a question which will never, I suppose, be quite satisfactorily answered.

It was, I think, in the summer of 1787, that my father was seized, one fine summer's day, with so intense a longing to see the sea, from which he had never before been so long absent, that he mounted his horse, rode alone to the coast of Lincolnshire, sixty miles from his house, dipped in the waves that washed the beach of Aldborough, and returned to Stathern.

During my father's residence here, and also at his other country places, he very rarely either paid or received visits, except in his clerical capacity; but there was one friend whose expanding versatility of mind and rare colloquial talents made him a most welcome visiter at Stathern—and he was a very frequent one. I allude to Dr. Edmund Cartwright, a poet and a mechanist of no small eminence, who at this period was the incumbent of Goadby, and occasionally lived there, though his principal residence was at Doncaster, where vast machines were worked under his direction. Few persons could tell a good story so well; no man could make more of a trite one. I can just remember him—the portly, dignified, old gentleman of the last generation—grave and polite, but full of humour and spirit. In the summer of 1787, my father and mother paid Dr. Cartwright a visit at Doncaster; but when she entered the vast building, full of engines thundering with resistless power, yet under the apparent management of children, the bare idea of the inevitable hazard attendant on such stupendous undertakings, quite overcame her feelings, and she burst into tears. On their return, Mrs. Elmy paid them a visit, and remained for some months with them. My mother's mother was a calm, composed, cheerful old lady, such as all admire, and as grandchildren adore. She had suffered many heavy afflictions, and had long made it her aim to suppress all violent emotions; and she succeeded, if perfect serenity of appearance, and the ultimate age of ninety-two, be fair indications of the peace within.

In October of the same year occurred a most unexpected event, to which I have already alluded—the untimely death of the Duke of Rutland, at the vice-regal palace, in Ireland. My father had a strong personal regard for his Grace, and grieved sincerely for the loss of a kind and condescending friend. Had he cherished ambitious views, he might have grieved for himself too. I have stated, that the Duke's disposition was generous and social: these traits meeting the spirit of the Irish, whom it was his wish to attach, and the customs of that period unhappily tempting him to prolonged festivity, he became a prey to an attack of fever; and the medical attendants were said to have overlooked that nice point, in inflammatory cases, where reduction should cease. He was only in the thirty-fifth year of his age; leaving a young and lovely widow, with six children, the eldest in his ninth year. His remains were brought to Belvoir Castle, to be interred in the family vault at Bottesford, and my father, of course, was present at the melancholy solemnity.

The widowed Duchess did not forget the *protégé* of her lamented husband: kindly desirous of retaining him in the neighbourhood, she gave him a letter to the Lord Chancellor, earnestly requesting him to exchange the two small livings Mr. Crabbe held in Dorsetshire for two of superior value in the vale of Belvoir. My father proceeded to London, but was not, on this occasion, very courteously received by Lord Thurlow. "No," he growled; "by G—d, I will not do this for any man in England." But he did it, nevertheless, for a woman in England. The good Duchess, on arriving in town, waited on him personally, to renew her request; and he yielded. My father, having passed the necessary examination at Lambeth, received a dispensation from the Archbishop, and became rector of Muston, in Leicestershire, and the neighbouring parish of Allington, in Lincolnshire.

It was on the 25th of February, 1789, that Mr. Crabbe left Stathern, and brought his family to the parsonage of Muston. Soon after this his father died. My grandfather, soon after my grandmother's death, had married again; and his new wife bringing home with her several children by a former husband, the house became still more uncomfortable than it

had for many years before been to the members of his own family. It was on the appearance of these strangers that my uncle William, the hero of the "Parting Hour," went to sea, never to return. For many years, the old man's habits had been undermining his health; but his end was sudden.

I am now arrived at that period of my father's life, when I became conscious of existence; when, if the happiness I experienced was not quite perfect, there was only alloy enough to make it felt the more. The reader himself will judge what must have been the lot of a child of such parents—how indulgence and fondness were mingled with care and solicitude.

What a pity it seems that the poignant feelings of early youth should ever be blunted, and, as it were, absorbed in the interests of manhood; that they cannot remain, together with the stronger stimuli of mature passions—passions so liable to make the heart ultimately selfish and cold. It is true, no one could endure the thoughts of remaining a child for ever; but with all that we gain, as we advance, some of the finer and better spirit of the mind appears to evaporate; seldom do we again feel those acute and innocent impressions, which recalling for a moment, one could almost cry to retain. Now and then, under peculiar circumstances, this youthful tenderness of feeling does return, when the spirits are depressed either by fatigue or illness, or some other softening circumstance; and then, especially if we should happen to hear some pleasing melody, even chimes or distant bells, a flood of early remembrances and warm affections flows into the mind, and we dwell on the past with the fondest regret; for such scenes are never to return: yet, though painful, these impressions are ever mingled with delight; we are tenacious of their duration, and feel the better for the transient susceptibility:—indeed transient; for soon the music ceases, the fatigue yields to rest, the mind recovers its strength, and straightway all is (to such salutary sensations) cold and insensible as marble. Surely the most delightful ideas one could connect with this sublunary state would be a union of these vivid impressions of infancy with the warmth and purity of passion in early youth, and the judgment of maturity:—perhaps such a union might faintly shadow the blessedness that may be hereafter.

How delightful is it to recall the innocent feelings of unbounded love, confidence, and respect, associated with my earliest visions of my parents. They appeared to their children not only good, but free from any taint of the corruption common to our nature; and such was the strength of the impressions then received, that hardly could subsequent experience ever enable our judgments to modify them. Many a happy and indulged child has, no doubt, partaken in the same fond exaggeration; but ours surely had every thing to excuse it.

Always visibly happy in the happiness of others, especially of children, our father entered into all our pleasures, and soothed and cheered us in all our little griefs with such overflowing tenderness, that it was no wonder we almost worshipped him. My first recollection of him is of his carrying me up to his private room to prayers, in the summer evenings, about sunset, and rewarding my silence and attention afterwards with a view of the flower-garden through his prism. Then I recall the delight it was to me to be permitted to sleep with him during a confinement of my mother's,—how I longed for the morning, because then he would be sure to tell me some fairy tale, of his own invention, all sparkling with gold and diamonds, magic fountains and enchanted princesses. In the eye of memory I can still see him as he was at that period of his life,—his fatherly countenance, unmixed with any of the less loveable expressions that, in too many faces, obscure that character—but pre-eminently *fatherly*; conveying the ideas of kindness, intellect, and purity; his manner grave, manly, and cheerful, in unison with his high and open forehead: his very attitudes, whether as he sat absorbed in the arrangement of his minerals, shells, and insects—or as he laboured in his garden until his naturally pale complexion acquired a tinge of fresh healthy red; or as, coming lightly towards us with some unexpected present, his smile of indescribable benevolence spoke exultation in the foretaste of our raptures.

But I think, even earlier than these are my first recollections of my mother. I think the very earliest is of her as combing my hair one *evening*, by the light of the fire, which hardly broke the long shadows of the room, and singing the plaintive air of "Kitty Fell," till, though I could not have been more than three years old, the melody found its way into my heart, and the tears dropped down so profusely that I was glad the darkness concealed them. How mysterious is shame without guilt!

There are few situations on earth more enviable than that of a child on his first journey with indulgent parents; there is perpetual excitement and novelty,—"*omne ignotum pro magnifico*,"—and at the same time a perfect freedom from care. This blessed ignorance of limits and boundaries, and absence of all forecast, form the very charm of the enchantment; each town appears indefinitely vast, each day as if it were never to have a close: no decline of any kind being dreamt of, the present is enjoyed in a way wholly impossible with those who have a long past to remember, and a dark future to anticipate. Never can I forget my first excursion into Suffolk, in company with my parents. It was in the month of September, 1790—(shortly

after my mother had recovered from her confinement with her fourth son, Edmund Crabbe, who died in his sixth year),—that, dressed in my first suit of boy's clothes (and that scarlet), in the height of a delicious season, I was mounted beside them in their huge old gig, and visited the scenes and the persons familiar to me, from my earliest nursery days, in their conversation and anecdotes. Sometimes, as we proceeded, my father read aloud; sometimes he left us for a while to botanise among the hedgerows, and returned with some unsightly weed or bunch of moss, to him precious. Then, in the evening, when we had reached our inn, the happy child, instead of being sent early as usual to bed, was permitted to stretch himself on the carpet, while the reading was resumed, blending with sounds which, from novelty, appeared delightful,—the buzzing of the bar, the rattling of wheels, the horn of the mail-coach, the gay clamour of the streets—everything to excite and astonish, in the midst of safety and repose. My father's countenance at such moments is still before me; —with what gentle sympathy did he seem to enjoy the happiness of childhood!

On the third day we reached Parham, and I was introduced to a sect of manners and customs, of which there remains, perhaps, no counterpart in the present day. My great-uncle's establishment was that of the first-rate yeoman of that period—the Yeoman that already began to be styled by courtesy an Esquire. Mr. Tovell might possess an estate of some eight hundred pounds per annum, a portion of which he himself cultivated. Educated at a mercantile school, he often said of himself, "Jack will never make a gentleman;" yet he had a native dignity of mind and of manners, which might have enabled him to pass muster in that character with any but very fastidious critics. His house was large, and the surrounding moat, the rookery, the ancient dove-cot, and the well-stored fishponds, were such as might have suited a gentleman's seat of some consequence; but one side of the house immediately overlooked a farm-yard, full of all sorts of domestic animals, and the scene of constant bustle and noise. On entering the house, there was nothing at first sight to remind one of the farm:—a spacious hall, paved with black and white marble,—at one extremity a very handsome drawing-room, and at the other a fine old staircase of black oak, polished till it was as slippery as ice, and having a chime-clock and a barrel-organ on its landing-places. But this drawing-room, a corresponding dining-parlour, and a handsome sleeping apartment up stairs, were all *tabooed* ground, and made use of on great and solemn occasions only—such as rent-days, and an occasional visit with which Mr. Tovell was honoured by a neighbouring peer. At all other times the family and their visiters lived entirely in the old-fashioned kitchen along with the servants. My great-uncle occupied an arm-chair, or, in attacks of gout, a couch on one side of a large open chimney. Mrs. Tovell sat at a small table, on which, in the evening, stood one small candle, in an iron candlestick, plying her needle by the feeble glimmer, surrounded by her maids, all busy at the same employment; but in winter a noble block of wood, sometimes the whole circumference of a pollard, threw its comfortable warmth and cheerful blaze over the apartment.

At a very early hour in the morning, the alarum called the maids, and their mistress also; and if the former were tardy, a louder alarum, and more formidable, was heard chiding the delay—not that scolding was peculiar to any occasion, it regularly ran on through all the day, like bells on harness, in spiriting the work, whether it were done ill or well. After the important business of the dairy, and a hasty breakfast, their respective employments were again resumed; that which the mistress took for her especial privilege being the scrubbing of the floors of the state apartments. A new servant, ignorant of her presumption, was found one morning on her knees, hard at work on the floor of one of these preserves, and was thus addressed by her mistress:—"*You* wash such floors as these? Give me the brush this instant, and troop to the scullery and wash that, madam! . . . . . As true as G—d 's in heaven, here comes Lord Rochford, to call on Mr. Tovell.—Here, take my mantle (a blue woollen apron), and I 'll go to the door!

If the sacred apartments had not been opened, the family dined on this wise;—the heads seated in the kitchen at an old table; the farm-men standing in the adjoining scullery, door open—the female servants at a side table, called a *bouter;*—with the principals, at the table, perchance some travelling rat-catcher, or tinker, or farrier, or an occasional gardener in his shirt-sleeves, his face probably streaming with perspiration. My father well describes, in "The Widow's Tale," my mother's situation, when living in her younger days at Parham:—

> "But when the men beside their station took,
> The maidens with them, and with these the cook;
> When one huge wooden bowl before them stood,
> Fill'd with huge balls of farinaceous food;
> With bacon, mass saline! where never lean
> Beneath the brown and bristly rind was seen.
> When from a single horn the party drew
> Their copious draughts of heavy ale and new;
> When the coarse cloth she saw, with many a stain,
> Soil'd by rude hinds who cut and came again;
> She could not breathe, but, with a heavy sigh,
> Rein'd the fair neck, and shut the offended eye;
> She minced the sanguine flesh in frustums fine,
> And wondered much to see the *creatures* dine."

On ordinary days, when the dinner was over, the fire replenished, the kitchen sanded and lightly swept over in waves, mistress and maids,

taking off their shoes, retired to their chambers for a nap of one hour to the minute. The dogs and cats commenced their siesta by the fire. Mr. Tovell dozed in his chair, and no noise was heard, except the melancholy and monotonous cooing of a turtle-dove, varied, however, by the shrill treble of a canary. After the hour had expired, the active part of the family were on the alert, the bottles (Mr. Tovell's tea equipage) placed on the table; and as if by instinct some old acquaintance would glide in for the evening's carousal, and then another, and another. If four or five arrived, the punchbowl was taken down, and emptied and filled again. But, whoever came, it was comparatively a dull evening, unless two especial Knights Companions were of the party;—one was a jolly old farmer, with much of the person and humour of Falstaff, a face as rosy as brandy could make it, and an eye teeming with subdued merriment; for he had that prime quality of a joker, superficial gravity:—the other was a relative of the family, a wealthy yeoman, middle-aged, thin, and muscular. He was a bachelor, and famed for his indiscriminate attachment to all who bore the name of woman,—young or aged, clean or dirty, a lady or a gipsy, it mattered not to him; all were equally admired. He had peopled the village green; and it was remarked, that, whoever was the mother, the children might be recognised in an instant to belong to him. Such was the strength of his constitution, that, though he seldom went to bed sober, he retained a clear eye and stentorian voice to his eightieth year, and coursed when he was ninety. He sometimes rendered the colloquies over the bowl peculiarly piquant; and so soon as his voice began to be elevated, one or two of the inmates, my father and mother for example, withdrew with Mrs. Tovell into her own *sanctum sanctorum*; but I, not being supposed capable of understanding much of what might be said, was allowed to linger on the skirts of the festive circle; and the servants, being considered much in the same point of view as the animals dozing on the hearth, remained, to have the full benefit of their wit, neither producing the slightest restraint, nor feeling it themselves.

After we had spent some weeks amidst this primitive set, we proceeded to Aldborough, where we were received with the most cordial welcome by my father's sister and her worthy husband, Mr. Sparkes. How well do I remember that morning!—my father watching the effect of the first view of the sea on my countenance, the tempered joyfulness of his manner when he carried me in his arms to the verge of the rippling waves, and the nameless delight with which I first inhaled the odours of the beach. What variety of emotions had he not experienced on that spot!—how unmingled would have been his happiness then, had his mother survived to see him as a husband and a father!

We visited also on this occasion my grandmother Mrs. Elmy, and her two daughters, at the delightful town of Beccles; and never can I forget the admiration with which I even then viewed this gem of the Waveney, and the fine old church (Beata Ecclesia), which gives name to the place; though, as there were no other children in the house, there were abundant attractions of another kind more suited to my years. In fact, Beccles seemed a paradise, as we visited from house to house with our kind relations. From this town we proceeded to a sweet little villa called Normanston, another of the early resorts of my mother and her lover, in the days of their anxious affection. Here four or five spinsters of independent fortune had formed a sort of Protestant nunnery, the abbess being Miss Blacknell, who afterwards deserted it to become the wife of the late Admiral Sir Thomas Graves, a lady of distinguished elegance in her tastes and manners. Another of the sisterhood was Miss Waldron, late of Tamworth,—dear, good-humoured, hearty, masculine Miss Waldron, who could sing a jovial song like a fox-hunter, and like him I had almost said toss a glass; and yet was there such an air of high *ton*, and such intellect mingled with these manners, that the perfect lady was not veiled for a moment,—no, not when, with a face rosy red, and an eye beaming with mirth, she would seize a cup and sing "Toby Fillpot," glorying as it were in her own jollity. When we took our morning rides, she generally drove my father in her phaeton, and interested him exceedingly by her strong understanding and conversational powers.

After morning prayers read by their clerical guest in the elegant boudoir, the carriages came to the door, and we went to some neighbouring town, or to the sea-side, or to a camp then formed at Hopton, a few miles distant; more frequently to Lowestoff; where, one evening, all adjourned to a dissenting chapel, to hear the venerable John Wesley on one of the last of his peregrinations. He was exceedingly old and infirm, and was attended, almost supported in the pulpit, by a young minister on each side. The chapel was crowded to suffocation. In the course of the sermon, he repeated, though with an application of his own, the lines from Anacreon—

> "Oft am I by women told,
> Poor Anacreon! thou grow'st old;
> See, thine hairs are falling all,
> Poor Anacreon! how they fall!
> Whether I grow old or no,
> By these signs I do not know;
> But this I need not to be told,
> 'T is time to *live* if I grow old."

My father was much struck by his reverend ap-

pearance and his cheerful air, and the beautiful cadence he gave to these lines; and, after the service, introduced himself to the patriarch, who received him with benevolent politeness.

Shortly after our return from Suffolk, the parsonage at Muston was visited by the late Mr. John Nichols, his son (the present "Mr. Urban"), and an artist engaged in making drawings for the History of Leicestershire. Mr. Crabbe on this occasion rendered what service he could to a work for which he had previously, as I have stated, undertaken to write a chapter of natural history; and was gratified, after his friend's return to London, by a present of some very fine Dutch engravings of plants, splendidly coloured.

In the spring of the next year (1792) my father preached a sermon at the visitation at Grantham, which so much struck the late Mr. Turner, rector of Denton and Wing, who had been commissioned to select a tutor for the sons of the Earl of Bute, that he came up after the service and solicited the preacher to receive these young noblemen into his family. But this he at once declined; and he never acted more wisely than in so doing. Like the late Archbishop Moore, when tutor to the sons of the Duke of Marlborough, he might easily have "read a-head" of his pupils, and thus concealed or remedied the defects of his own education; but the restraint of strange inmates would have been intolerable in my father's humble parsonage, and nothing could have repaid him for submitting to such an interruption of all his domestic habits and favourite pursuits.

About this time he became intimately acquainted with the late Dr. Gordon, precentor of Lincoln, father to the present dean, and my mother and he passed some time with him at his residence near the cathedral. This was another of those manly, enlarged minds, for which he ever felt a strong partiality; and on the same grounds he felt the same regard, many years afterwards, for his son.

In October of this year Mr. Crabbe was enclosing a new garden for botanic specimens, and had just completed the walls, when he was suddenly summoned into Suffolk to act as executor to Mr. Tovell, who had been carried off before there was time to announce his illness; and on his return, after much deliberation (many motives contending against very intelligible scruples), my father determined to place a curate at Muston, and to go and reside at Parham, taking the charge of some church in that neighbourhood.

Though tastes and affections, as well as worldly interests, prompted this return to native scenes and early acquaintances, it was a step reluctantly taken, and, I believe, sincerely repented of. The beginning was ominous. As we were slowly quitting the place, preceded by our furniture, a stranger, though one who knew my father's circumstances, called out in an impressive tone, "You are wrong, you are wrong." The sound, he said, found an echo in his own conscience, and during the whole journey seemed to ring in his ears like a supernatural voice.

CHAPTER VII.

1792—1804.

Mr. Crabbe's Residence in Suffolk—at Parham—at Glemham—and at Rendham.

In November, 1792, we arrived once more at Parham;—but how changed was every thing since I had first visited that house, then the scene of constant mirth and hospitality! As I got out of the chaise, I remember jumping for very joy, and exclaiming, "Here we are—here we are, little Willy[1] and all!" but my spirits sunk into dismay when, on entering the well-known kitchen, all there seemed desolate, dreary, and silent. Mrs. Tovell and her sister-in-law, sitting by the fireside weeping, did not even rise up to welcome my parents, but uttered a few chilling words, and wept again. All this appeared to me as inexplicable as forbidding. How little do children dream of the alterations that elder people's feelings towards each other undergo, when death has caused a transfer of property! Our arrival in Suffolk was by no means palatable to all my mother's relations.

Mrs. Elmy and her sister Miss Tovell, were their brother's co-heiresses; the latter was an ancient maiden, living in a cottage hard by, and persuaded that every thing ought to have been left to her own management. I think I see her now, with her ivory-tipped walking-cane, a foot, at least, above her head, scolding about some change that would, as she said, have made "Jacky" (her late brother), if he had seen it, shake in his grave,—the said change being perhaps, the removal of a print from one room to another, and my father having purchased every atom of the furniture when he came into the house.

My father being at least as accessible to the slightest mark of kindness as to any species of offence, the cool old dame used to boast, not without reason, that she could "screw Crabbe up and down like a fiddle." Every now and then she screwed her violin a little too tightly; but still there was never any real malice on either side. When, some time after, the hand of death was on Miss Tovell, she sent for Mr. Crabbe, and was attended by him with the greatest tenderness; nor did she at last execute her oft-repeated threat of making a *cadicy*—Anglicè, a codicil—to her will.

In many circumstances, besides, my father

[1] My father's seventh and youngest child.

found the disadvantage of succeeding such a man as Mr. Tovell. He invited none of the old compotators, and if they came received them but coolly; and it was soon said that "Parham had passed away, and the glory thereof." When the paper of parish rates came round, he perceived that he was placed on a much higher scale of payment than his wealthy predecessor had ever been for the very same occupation; and when he complained of this, he was told very plainly,—"Why, sir, Mr. Tovell was a good neighbour: we all miss him sadly; and so, I suppose, do you, sir; and—and——" "I understand you," said my father, "perfectly; now, sir, I refuse this rate: take your remedy." He resisted this charge; and the consequences may be guessed.

Having detected the bailiff in some connection with smugglers, he charged him with the fact. The man flew into a violent passion, grasped a knife, and exclaimed with an inflamed countenance, "No man shall call me a rogue!" My father smiled at his rage, and said, in a quiet tone,—"Now, Robert you are too much for me: put down your knife, and then we can talk on equal terms." The man hesitated: my father added, lifting his voice, "Get out of the house, you scoundrel!" and he was obeyed. On all occasions, indeed, he appeared to have a perfect insensibility to physical danger.

I have said that Mr. and Mrs. Crabbe were not in the habit of visiting. In fact, his father's station and straitened circumstances, and the customs of his native place, had prevented his forming any early habit of such intercourse. His own domestic and literary pursuits indisposed him still further; and my mother's ill health combined to prevent any regular sociality with the families in their neighbourhood; but both at Muston and Parham they had some valued friends occasionally residing with them for many weeks, especially an old lady of Aldborough, who had been intimate with my father's family, and was fallen into poverty, and who was ever received with cordiality and respect. But, at one house in the vicinity of Parham, my father was a frequent visiter. To Mr. Dudley North he felt himself attached by the ties of gratitude, and strongly attracted both by the mutual knowledge of Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, and other public characters, and by his own superior mind and manners; for though, according to Mr. Boswell's account of a conversation, Dr. Johnson mentions him somewhat lightly to Mrs. Thrale, yet it is to be remembered that that lady provoked him to it by her reiterated eulogium, and, moreover, that Mr. North was a Whig. But he was distinguished, even among the eminent characters of the day, for the high polish of his manners and the brilliancy of his wit. Though a silent member of the house (for he had a strong impediment in his utterance), "yet," said Mr. Fox, "we owe to Dudley's suggestions some of the best hits we have made."

From this friend, whose seat (Little Glemham Hall) was within two miles of Parham, my father received every kindness and attention. I remember a well-stored medicine-chest arriving one morning—for Mr. Crabbe still continued to administer to the poor gratis—and game, fruit, and other produce of his domain were sent in profusion. It was in the autumn of 1794, or 1795, that he had the honour of meeting at Mr. North's, a large party of some of the most eminent men in the kingdom—the Honourable Charles (now Earl) Grey, the Earl of Lauderdale, Mr. Fox, Mr. Roger Wilbraham, Dr. Parr, Mr. St. John, and several other public characters. Mr. Fox, cordially recognising my father, expressed his disappointment that his pen had been so long unemployed; and it was then that he promised to revise any future poem which Mr. Crabbe might prepare for publication. One day,—for it was a shooting party, and they stayed about a fortnight,—in passing from the saloon to the dining-room, while there was a momentary pause, Mr. Fox playfully pushed my father first, saying, "If he had had his deserts,[2] he would have walked before us all." If this was an unmerited compliment, it was assuredly a very good humoured one.

Annoyances out of doors and within probably induced him, shortly after his arrival in Suffolk, to pay a visit of several months to his sister at Aldborough; and when there, he had the great satisfaction of placing my brother John and myself under the tuition of one of the good old dames who had taught himself his letters. On returning to Parham, he undertook the charge of Sweffling, for the respected incumbent of that parish, the Reverend Richard Turner, of Great Yarmouth. Another curacy (Great Glemham) was shortly added to this; and thenceforth, his occupations and habits were very much what they had used to be at Muston.

He had been about four years at Parham before another residence, quite suitable to his views, presented itself; and the opportunity of changing occurred at a moment when it was more than ever to be desired. In March, 1796, Mr. Crabbe lost his third son, a fine promising lad, then in his sixth year. His family had been seven, and they were now reduced to two. The loss of this child was so severely felt by my mother, that it caused a nervous disorder, from which she never entirely recovered; and it became my father's very earnest wish to quit Parham, where the thoughts of that loss were unavoidably cherished. Great Glemham Hall, a house belonging to Mr. North, becoming vacant at that time, he very obligingly invited my father to be his tenant, at a greatly reduced

[2] Alluding to his station at Belvoir.

rent; and, on the 17th of October, the *lares* were removed from Parham, where they had been always unpropitious, to this beautiful residence, where my parents remained for four or five years, to their entire satisfaction. The situation was delightful in itself, and extremely convenient for the clerical duties my father had to perform. I was now placed at school at Ipswich, under the care of the late excellent Mr. King, in whom my father had the most perfect confidence; but I passed, of course, my vacations at home; and never can I cease to look back to my days at Glemham as the golden spot of my existence.

In June, 1798, on Mr. King's retiring from the school at Ipswich, I returned home finally; for it was soon resolved that I should not be sent to any other master, but that my brother and myself should prepare for the University under our father's own care. If I except occasional visits of a month or two to Muston, the associations of our happiest years are all with Glemham and other scenes in his native county. Glemham itself is, and ever will be, the Alhambra of my imagination. That glorious palace yet exists; ours is levelled with the ground.[3] A small well-wooded park occupied the whole mouth of the glen, whence, doubtless, the name of the village was derived. In the lowest ground stood the commodious mansion; the approach wound down through a plantation on the eminence in front. The opposite hill rose at the back of it, rich and varied with trees and shrubs scattered irregularly; under this southern hill ran a brook, and on the banks above it were spots of great natural beauty, crowned by white-thorn and oak. Here the purple scented violet perfumed the air, and in one place coloured the ground. On the left of the front, in the narrower portion of the glen, was the village; on the right, a confined view of richly wooded fields. In fact, the whole parish and neighbourhood resemble a combination of groves, interspersed with fields cultivated like gardens, and intersected with those green dry lanes which tempt the walker in all weathers, especially in the evenings, when in the short grass of the dry sandy banks lies every few yards a glow-worm, and the nightingales are pouring forth their melody in every direction.

My father was a skilful mathematician; and imperfectly as he had been grounded in the classics at school, he had, as I have stated, been induced, by various motives, to become a very respectable scholar; and not the least of these motives was his strong partiality for Latin poetry, which continued to the last, his library table, and even his bed-room, being seldom without some favourite work of this description. But there may be great defects in a domestic education, without any want of knowledge in the master. Seldom is such tuition carried on with strict regularity and perseverance, for family interruptions unavoidably occur daily; and such an indulgent mind as his, conscious, too, of its own hatred to restraint, was not likely to enforce the necessary discipline. So that, to my infinite satisfaction, this new academy had much more of vacation than term-time: contrasted with Ipswich, it seemed little else than one glorious holiday.

The summer evenings especially, at this place, dwell on my memory like a delightful dream. When we had finished our lessons, if we did not adjourn with my father to the garden to work in our own plats, we generally took a family walk through the green lanes around Glemham; where, at every turn, stands a cottage or a farm, and not collected into a street, as in some parts of the kingdom, leaving the land naked and forlorn. Along these we wandered sometimes till the moon had risen, my mother leading a favourite little niece who lived with us, my father reading some novel aloud, while my brother and I caught moths or other insects to add to his collection. Since I have mentioned novels, I may say that even from the most trite of these fictions, he could sometimes catch a train of ideas that was turned to an excellent use; so that he seldom passed a day without reading part of some such work, and was never very select in the choice of them. To us they were all, in those days, interesting, for they suggested some pleasing imaginings, the idea of some pretty little innocent-looking village heroine, perhaps, whom we had seen at church, or in a ramble; and while he read Mrs. Inchbald's deeply pathetic story, called "Nature and Art," one evening, I believe some such association almost broke our hearts. When it was too dark to see, he would take a battledore and join us in the pursuit of the moths, or carry his little favourite if she were tired, and so we proceeded homeward, while on the right and left, before and behind, the nightingales (I never heard so many as among those woods) were pouring out their melody, sometimes three or four at once. And now we fill the margin of our hats with glow-worms to place upon the lawn before our windows, and reach the house only in time for supper.

In the winter evenings the reading was carried on more systematically, and we had generally books of a superior description; for a friend lent us every Christmas a large box of the most reputable works recently published, especially of travels; and never can I forget the deep interest with which we heard my father read Stedman's Surinam, Park's Africa, Macartney's China, and several similar publications of that period. He read in that natural and easy manner, that permits the whole attention to be given to

[3] A new and elegant mansion has been built on the hill, by Dr. Kilderbee, who bought the estate.

the subject. Some (I think miscalled "good readers") are so wonderfully correct and emphatic, that we are obliged to think of the reading, instead of the story. In repeating anything of a pathetic nature, I never heard his equal; nay, there was a nameless something about his intonation which could sometimes make even a ludicrous stanza affecting. We had been staying a week at a friend's house (a very unusual circumstance), and among his large and fine family was one daughter so eminently beautiful and graceful as to excite general admiration; and the writer (now fifteen) very naturally fancied himself deeply in love with her. On returning home, my heart was too full to trust myself near the chaise, so I rode far behind, calling the setting sun and the golden tints of the west to witness my most solemn determination to raise myself to a rank worthy of this young enchantress. We stopped at an inn to rest the horses, and my father began to read aloud the well-known mock heroic from the "Anti-jacobin,"—

"Barbs! barbs! alas! how swift ye flew
Her neat post-wagon trotting in!
Ye bore Matilda from my view.
Forlorn I languish'd at the U-
niversity of Gottingen,
niversity of Gottingen."

In itself the song is an exquisite burlesque; but the cadence he gave it was entirely irresistible, and at the words, "Sweet, sweet, Matilda Pottingen," I could suppress the accumulated grief no longer. "O ho!" said he, "I see how the case is now!" and he shut the book, and soothed me with inexpressible kindness.

My father, now about his forty-sixth year, was much more stout and healthy than when I first remember *him*. Soon after that early period, he became subject to vertigoes, which he thought indicative of a tendency to apoplexy; and was occasionally bled rather profusely, which only increased the symptoms. When he preached his first sermon at Muston, in the year 1789, my mother foreboded, as she afterwards told us, that he would preach very few more: but it was on one of his early journeys into Suffolk, in passing through Ipswich, that he had the most alarming attack. Having left my mother at the inn, he walked into the town alone, and suddenly staggered in the street, and fell. He was lifted up by the passengers, and overheard some one say, significantly, "Let the gentleman alone, he will be better by and by;" for his fall was attributed to the bottle. He was assisted to his room, and the late Dr. Clubbe was sent for, who, after a little examination, saw through the case with great judgment. "There is nothing the matter with your head," he observed, "nor any apoplectic tendency; let the digestive organs bear the whole blame: you must take opiates." From that time his health began to amend rapidly, and his constitution was renovated; a rare effect of opium, for that drug almost always inflicts some partial injury, even when it is necessary; but to him it was only salutary, and to a constant but slightly increasing dose of it may be attributed his long and generally healthy life. His personal appearance also was improved with his health and his years. This is by no means an uncommon case: many an ordinary youth has widened and rounded into a well-looking dignified middle-aged man. His countenance was never ordinary, but health of itself gives a new charm to any features; and his figure, which in his early years had been rather thin and weakly, was now muscular and almost athletic.

During the whole time my father officiated in Suffolk, he was a popular preacher, and had always large congregations; for, notwithstanding what I have observed on this subject, and that he adopted not what are called evangelical principles, yet was he deemed a gospel preacher: but this term, as it was applied then and there, fell short of the meaning it now conveys. It signified simply a minister who urges his flock to virtuous conduct, by placing a future award ever full in their view, instead of dwelling on the temporal motives rendered so prominent at that time by many of his brethren.

His style of reading in the desk was easy and natural—at any rate, natural to him, though a fastidious ear might find in it a species of affectation, something a little like assumed authority; but there was no tone, nothing of sing-song. He read too rapidly, it is true: but surely this was an error on the right side. The extremely slow enunciation of matter so very familiar is enough to make piety itself impatient. In the pulpit he was entirely unaffected; read his sermon with earnestness, and in a voice and manner, on some occasions, peculiarly affecting; but he made no attempt at extempore preaching, and utterly disregarded all the mechanism of oratory. And he had at that time another trait, very desirable in a minister—the most complete exemption from fear or solicitude. "I must have some money, gentlemen," he would say, in stepping from the pulpit. This was his notice of tithe-day. Once or twice, finding it grow dark, he abruptly shut his sermon, saying, "Upon my word I cannot see; I must give you the rest when we meet again." Or, he would walk into a pew near a window, and stand on the seat and finish his sermon, with the most admirable indifference to the remarks of his congregation. He was always, like his own Author-Rector, in the Parish Register, "careless of hood and band," &c.

I have mentioned that my mother was attacked, on the death of her son Edmund, by a nervous disorder; and it proved of an increasing and very lamentable kind; for, during the hotter months of almost every year, she was oppressed by the deepest dejection of spirits I ever wit-

nessed in any one, and this circumstance alone was sufficient to undermine the happiness of so feeling a mind as my father's. Fortunately for both, there were long intervals, in which, if her spirits were a little too high, the relief to herself and others was great indeed. Then she would sing over her old tunes again—and be the frank, cordial, charming woman of earlier days.

This severe domestic affliction, however, did not seriously interrupt my father's pursuits and studies, although I think it probable that it was one of the main causes of that long abstinence from society, which has already been alluded to as one of the most remarkable features in his personal history. He continued at Glemham, as he had done at Parham and Muston, the practice of literary composition. My brother says, in a memorandum now before me, "While searching for and examining plants or insects, he was moulding verses into measure and smoothness. No one who observed him at these times could doubt that he enjoyed exquisite pleasure in composing. He had a degree of action while thus walking and versifying, which I hardly ever observed when he was preaching or reading. The hand was moved up and down; the pace quickened. He was, nevertheless, fond of considering poetical composition as a species of task and labour, and would say, 'I have been hard at work, and have had a good morning.'"

My father taught himself both French and Italian, so as to read and enjoy the best authors in either language, though he knew nothing of their pronunciation. He also continued all through his residence in Suffolk the botanical and entomological studies to which he had been so early devoted. I rather think, indeed, that this was, of his whole life, the period during which he carried the greatest and most indefatigable zeal into his researches in Natural History. There was, perhaps, no one of its departments to which he did not, at some time or other, turn with peculiar ardour; but, generally speaking, I should be inclined to say, that those usually considered as the least inviting had the highest attractions for him. In botany, grasses, the most useful, but the least ornamental, were his favourites; in minerals, the earths and sands; in entomology, the minuter insects. His devotion to these pursuits appeared to proceed purely from the love of science and the increase of knowledge—at all events, he never seemed to be captivated with the mere beauty of natural objects, or even to catch any taste for the arrangement of his own specimens. Within the house was a kind of scientific confusion; in the garden, the usual showy foreigners gave place to the most scarce flowers, and especially to the rarer weeds, of Britain; and these were scattered here and there only for preservation. In fact, he neither loved order for its own sake, nor had any very high opinion of that passion in others; witness his words, in the tale of Stephen Jones, the "Learned Boy,"—

> "The *love of order*—I the thing receive
> From reverend men—and I in part believe—
> Shows a clear mind and clean, and whoso needs
> This love, but seldom in the world succeeds.
> Still has *the love of order* found a place
> With all that 's low, degrading, mean, and base;
> With all that merits scorn, and all that meets disgrace.
> In the cold miser of all change afraid,
> In pompous men in public seats obeyed,
> In humble placemen, heralds, solemn drones,
> Fanciers of flowers, and lads like Stephen Jones;
> Order to these is armour and defence,
> And love of method serves for lack of sense."

Whatever truth there may be in these lines, it is certain that this insensibility to the beauty of order was a defect in his own mind; arising from what I must call his want of taste. There are, no doubt, very beautiful detached passages in his writings—passages apparently full of this very quality. It is not, however, in detached parts of a poem that the criterion of this principle properly lies, but in the conduct of the whole; in the selection of the subject and its amplifications; in the relative disposition and comparative prominency of the parts, and in the contrasts afforded by bearing lightly or heavily on the pencil. In these things Mr. Crabbe is generally admitted to be not a little deficient; and what can demonstrate the high rank of his other qualifications better than the fact, that he could acquire such a reputation in spite of so serious a disadvantage? This view of his mind, I must add, is confirmed by his remarkable indifference to almost all the proper objects of taste. He had no real love for painting, or music, or architecture, or for what a painter's eye considers as the beauties of landscape. But he had a passion for science—the science of the human mind, first; then, that of nature in general; and, lastly, that of abstract quantities. His powerful intellect did not seem to require the ideas of sense to move it to enjoyment, but he could at all times find luxury in the most dry and forbidding calculations.

One of his chief labours at this period was the completion of the English Treatise on Botany, which I mentioned at an earlier page of this narrative, and the destruction of which I still think of with some regret. He had even gone so far as to propose its publication to Mr. Dodsley, before the scruples of another interfered, and made him put the manuscript into the fire. But among other prose writings of the same period some were of a class which, perhaps, few have ever suspected Mr. Crabbe of meddling with, though it be one in which so many of his poetical contemporaries have earned high distinction. During one or two of his winters in Suffolk, he gave most of his evening

hours to the writing of *Novels*, and he brought not less than three such works to a conclusion. The first was entitled "The Widow Grey;" but I recollect nothing of it except that the principal character was a benevolent humourist, a Dr. Allison. The next was called "Reginald Glanshaw, or the Man who commanded Success;" a portrait of an assuming, overbearing, ambitious mind, rendered interesting by some generous virtues, and gradually wearing down into idiotism. I cannot help thinking that this Glanshaw was drawn with very extraordinary power; but the story was not well managed in the details. I forget the title of his third novel; but I clearly remember that it opened with a description of a wretched room, similar to some that are presented in his poetry, and that, on my mother's telling him frankly that she thought the effect very inferior to that of the corresponding pieces in verse, he paused in his reading, and, after some reflection, said, "Your remark is just." The result was a leisurely examination of all these manuscript novels, and another of those grand incremations which, at an earlier period, had been sport to his children. The prefaces and dedications to his poems have been commended for simple elegance of language; nor was it in point of diction, I believe, that his novels would have been found defective, but rather in that want of skill and taste for order and arrangement, which I have before noticed as displayed even in his physiological pursuits.

He had now accumulated so many poetical pieces of various descriptions, that he began to think of appearing once more in the capacity which had first made him known to fame. In the course of the year 1799, he opened a communication with Mr. Hatchard, the well-known bookseller, and was encouraged to prepare for publication a series of poems, sufficient to fill a volume—among others, one on the Scripture story of Naaman; another, strange contrast! entitled "Gipsy Will;" and a third founded on the legend of the Pedlar of Swaffham. But before finally committing his reputation to the hazards of a new appearance, he judiciously paused to consult the well-known taste of the Reverend Richard Turner, already mentioned as rector of Sweffling. This friendly critic advised further revision, and his own mature opinion coinciding with that thus modestly hinted, he finally rejected the tales I have named altogether; deferred for a further period of eight years his re-appearance as a poetical author; and meantime began "The Parish Register," and gradually finished it, and the smaller pieces, which issued with it from the press in 1807.

Since I have been led to mention Mr. Turner in this manner, let me be pardoned for adding, that one of the chief sources of comfort all through my father's residence in Suffolk was his connection with this honoured man. He considered his judgment a sure safeguard and reliance in all cases practical and literary. The peculiar characteristic of his vigorous mind being an interest, not a seeming, but a real interest, in every object of nature and art, he had stored it with multifarious knowledge, and had the faculty of imparting some portion of the interest he felt on all subjects, by the zeal and relish with which he discussed them. With my father he would converse on natural history, as if this had been his whole study; with my mother, on mechanical contrivances and new inventions, for use or ornament, as if that were an exclusive taste; while he would amuse us young folks with well-told anecdotes, and to walk or ride with him was considered our happiest privilege. Mr. Turner is too extensively and honourably known to need any such eulogy as I can offer; but my father's most intimate friend and chosen critic will forgive the effusion of my regard and respect. While at Glemham, as at Parham, my father rarely visited any neighbours except Mr. North and his brother Mr. Long; nor did he often receive any visiters. But one week in every year was to him, and to all his household, a period of peculiar enjoyment—that during which he had Mr. Turner for his guest.

About this time the bishops began very properly to urge all non-resident incumbents to return to their livings; and Mr. Dudley North, willing to retain my father in his neighbourhood, took the trouble to call upon the Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Prettyman, and to request that Mr. Crabbe might remain in Suffolk; adding, as an argument in favour of the solicited indulgence, his kindness and attention to his present parishioners. But his Lordship would not yield—observing that they of Muston and Allington had a prior claim. "Now," said Mr. North, when he reported his failure, "we must try and procure you an incumbency here;" and one in his own gift becoming vacant, he very obligingly offered it to my father. This living[4] was, however, too small to be held singly, and he prepared ultimately (having obtained an additional furlough of four years) to return to his own parishes. His strong partiality to Suffolk was not the only motive for desiring to remain in that county, and near to all our relatives on both sides; he would have sacrificed mere personal inclination without hesitation, but he was looking to the interests of his children.

In the autumn of 1801, Mr. North and his brother, having a joint property in the Glemham estate, agreed to divide by selling it; and in October we left this sweet place, and entered a house at Rendham, a neighbouring village, for the four years we were to remain in the East Angles.

[4] The two Glemhams, both in the gift of Mrs. North, were lately presented to my brother John, who is now the incumbent.

In July, 1802, my father paid his last visit to Muston, previous to his final return. We passed through Cambridge in the week of the commencement; and he was introduced by the Vice-Master of Trinity to the present Duke of Rutland, whom he had not seen since he was a child, and to several other public characters. I then saw from the gallery of the Senate House the academical ceremonies in all their imposing effect, and viewed them with the more interest, because I was soon after to be admitted to Trinity. The area below was entirely filled. The late Duchess of Rutland attracted much admiration. There were the Bishops of Lincoln and Bath and Wells, and many others of high rank; but, conspicuous above all, the commanding height and noble bust, and intellectual and dignified countenance of Mr. Pitt. I fancied—perhaps it was only partiality—that there was, in that assembly, another high forehead very like his.

My father haunted the Botanic Garden whenever he was at Cambridge, and he had a strong partiality for the late worthy curator, Mr. James Donn. "Donn is—Donn is," said he one day, seeking an appropriate epithet,—"a man," said my mother; and it was agreed that it was the very word. And, should any reader of these pages remember that independent, unassuming, but uncompromising character, he will assent to the distinction. He had no little-minded suspicions, or narrow self-interest. He read my father's character at once—felt assured of his honour, and when he rang at the gate for admission to pass the morning in selecting such duplicates of plants as could be well spared from the garden, Donn would receive us with a grave, benevolent smile, which said, "Dear Sir, you are freely welcome to wander where, and to select what, you will—I am sure you will do us no injury."

On our return through Cambridge, I was examined, and entered; and in October, 1803, went to reside. When I left college for the Christmas vacation, I found my father and mother stationed at Aldborough for the winter, and was told of a very singular circumstance which had occurred while I was absent. My father had received a letter from a stranger, signing his name "Aldersey" (dated from Ludlow), stating that, having read his publications, he felt a strong inclination to have the pleasure of his society—that he possessed property enough for both, and requested him to relinquish any engagements he might have of a professional nature, and reside with him. The most remarkable part of the matter was, the perfect coherency with which this strange offer was expressed.

One day about this time, casually stepping into a bookseller's at Ipswich, my father first saw the "Lay of the last Minstrel." A few words only riveted his attention, and he read it nearly through while standing at the counter, observing, "a new and great poet has appeared!" How often have I heard him repeat those striking lines near the commencement of that poem:—

> "The lady 's gone into her secret cell,
> Jesu Maria! shield us well!"

He was for several years, like many other readers, a cool admirer of the earlier and shorter poems of what is called the Lake School; but, even when he smiled at the exceeding simplicity of the language, evidently found something in it peculiarly attractive; for there were few modern works which he opened so frequently—and he soon felt and acknowledged, with the public, that in that simplicity was veiled genius of the greatest magnitude. Of Burns he was ever as enthusiastic an admirer as the warmest of his own countrymen. On his high appreciation of the more recent works of his distinguished contemporaries, it is needless to dwell.[5]

I have not much more to say with respect to my father's second residence in Suffolk; but I must not dismiss this period—a considerable one in the sum of his life—without making some allusion to certain rumours which, long before it terminated, had reached his own parish of Muston, and disinclined the hearts of many of the country people there to receive him, when he again returned among them, with all the warmth of former days. When first it was reported among those villagers by a casual traveller from Suffolk, that Mr. Crabbe was a *Jacobin*, there were few to believe the story—"it must be a *loy*, for the rector had always been a good, kind gentleman, and much noticed by *the Duke*;" but by degrees the tale was more and more disseminated, and at length it gained a pretty general credence among a population which, being purely agricultural—and, therefore, connecting every notion of what was praiseworthy with the maintenance of the war that, undoubtedly, had raised agricultural prices to an unprecedented scale—was affected in a manner extremely disagreeable to my father's feelings, and even worldly interests, by such an impression as thus

[5] My brother says on this subject—"He heartily assented to the maxim, that—allowing a fair time, longer in some cases than in others—a book would find its proper level; and that a well-filled theatre would form a just opinion of a play or an actor. Yet he would not timidly wait the decision of the public, but give his opinion freely. Soon after Waverley appeared, he was in a company where a gentleman of some literary weight was speaking of it in a disparaging tone. A lady defended the new novel, but with a timid reserve. Mr. Crabbe called out, 'Do not be frightened, Madam; you are right: speak your opinion boldly.' Yet he did not altogether like Sir Walter's principal male characters. He thought they wanted gentleness and urbanity; especially Quentin Durward, Halbert Glendinning, and Nigel. He said Colonel Mannering's age and peculiar situation excused his haughtiness; but he disliked fierceness and glorying, and the trait he especially admired in Prince Henry, was his greatness of mind in yielding the credit of Hotspur's death to his old companion Falstaff. Henry, at Agincourt, 'covetous of honour,' was ordinary, he said, to this."

originated. The truth is, that my father never was a politician—that is to say, he never allowed political affairs to occupy much of his mind at any period of his life, or thought either better or worse of any individual for the bias he had received. But he did not, certainly, approve of the *origin* of the war that was raging while he lived at Parham, Glemham, and Rendham; nor did he ever conceal his opinion, that this war might have been avoided—and hence, in proportion to the weight of his local character, he gave offence to persons maintaining the diametrically opposite view of public matters at that peculiar crisis. As to the term *Jacobin*, I shall say only one word. None could have been less fitly applied to him at any period of his life. He was one of the innumerable good men who, indeed, hailed the beginning of the French Revolution, but who execrated its close. No syllable in approbation of Jacobins or Jacobinism ever came from his tongue or from his pen; and as to the "child and champion of Jacobinism," Napoleon had not long pursued his career of ambition, before my father was well convinced that to put *him* down was the first duty of every nation that wished to be happy and free.

With respect to the gradual change which his early sentiments on political subjects in general unquestionably underwent, I may as well, perhaps, say a word or two here; for the topic is one I have no wish to recur to again.

Perhaps the natural tendency of every young man who is conscious of powers and capabilities above his station, is, to adopt what are called popular or liberal opinions. He peculiarly feels the disadvantages of his own class, and is tempted to look with jealousy on all those who, with less natural talent, enjoy superior privileges. But, if this young man should succeed in raising himself by his talents into a higher walk of society, it is perhaps equally natural that he should imbibe aristocratic sentiments: feeling the reward of his exertions to be valuable in proportion to the superiority of his acquired station, he becomes an advocate for the privileges of rank in general, reconciling his desertion of the exclusive interests of his former caste, by alleging the facility of his own rise. And if he should be assisted by patronage, and become acquainted with his patrons, the principle of gratitude, and the opportunity of witnessing the manners of the great, would contribute materially to this change in his feelings. Such is, probably, the natural tendency of such a rise in society; and, in truth, I do not think Mr. Crabbe's case was an exception. The popular opinions of his father were, I think, originally embraced by him rather from the unconscious influence I have alluded to, than from the deliberate conviction of his judgment. But his was no ordinary mind, and he did not desert them merely from the vulgar motive of interest. At Belvoir he had more than once to drink a glass of salt water, because he would not join in Tory toasts. He preserved his early partialities through all this trying time of Tory patronage; and of course he felt, on the whole, a greater political accord with the owner of Glemham and his distinguished guests. But when, in the later portion of his life, he became still more intimate with the highest ranks of society, and mingled with them, not as a young person whose fortune was not made, and who had therefore to assert his independence, but as one whom talent had placed above the suspicion of subserviency; when he felt the full advantages of his rise, and became the rector of a large town, and a magistrate, I think again, the aristocratic and Tory leanings he then showed were rather the effect of these circumstances than of any alteration of judgment founded upon deliberate inquiry and reflection. But of this I am sure, that his own passions were never violently enlisted in any political cause whatever; and that to purely *party* questions he was, first and last, almost indifferent. The dedication of his poems to persons of such opposite opinions arose entirely from motives of personal gratitude and attachment; and he carried his impartiality so far, that I have heard him declare, he thought it very immaterial who were our representatives in parliament, provided they were men of integrity, liberal education, and possessed an adequate stake in the country.

I shall not attempt to defend this apathy on a point of such consequence, but it accounts for circumstances which those who feel no such moderation might consider as aggravated instances of inconsistency. He not only felt an equal regard for persons of both parties, but would willingly have given his vote to either; and at one or two general elections, I believe he actually did so;—for example, to Mr. Benett, the Whig candidate for Wiltshire, and to Lord Douro and Mr. Croker,[6] the Tory candidates at Aldborough.

[6] I take the liberty of quoting what follows, from a letter with which I have lately been honoured by the Right Honourable J. W. Croker:—"I have heard, from those who knew Mr. Crabbe earlier than I had the pleasure of doing (and his communications with *me* led to the same conclusion), that he never was a violent nor even a zealous politician. He was, as a conscientious clergyman might be expected to be, a church-and-king man; but he seemed to me to think and care less about party politics than any man of his condition in life that I ever met. At one of my elections for Aldeburgh, he happened to be in the neighbourhood, and he did me the honour of attending in the Town Hall, and proposing me. This was, I suppose, the last act of his life which had any reference to politics—at least, to local politics; for it was, I believe, his last visit to the place of his nativity. My opinion of his admirable works, I took the liberty of recording in a note on Boswell's Johnson. To that opinion, on reconsideration, and frequent reperusals of his poems, I adhere with increased confidence; and I hope you will not think me presumptuous for adding, that I was scarcely more struck by his genius, than by the amiable simplicity of his manners, and the dignified modesty of his mind. With talents of a much higher order, he realised all that we read of the personal amiability of Gay."

The note on Boswell, to which Mr. Croker here refers, is in these terms:—"The writings of this amiable gentleman have placed him high on the roll of British poets; though his

He says, in a letter on this subject, "With respect to the parties themselves, Whig and Tory, I can but think, two dispassionate, sensible men, who have seen, read, and observed, will approximate in their sentiments more and more; and if they confer together, and argue,—not to convince each other, but for pure information, and with a simple desire for the truth,—the ultimate difference will be small indeed. The Tory, for instance, would allow that, but for the Revolution in this country, and the noble stand against the arbitrary steps of the house of Stuart, the kingdom would have been in danger of becoming what France once was; and the Whig must also grant, that there is at least an equal danger in an unsettled, undefined democracy; the ever-changing laws of a popular government. Every state is at times on the inclination to change: either the monarchical or the popular interest will predominate; and in the former case, I conceive, the well-meaning Tory will incline to Whiggism,—in the latter, the honest Whig will take the part of declining monarchy." I quote this as a proof of the political moderation I have ascribed to him; and I may appeal with safety, on the same head, to the whole tenour, not only of his published works, but of his private conversations and pastoral discourses.

We happened to be on a visit at Aldborough, when the dread of a French invasion was at its height. The old artillery of the fort had been replaced by cannon of a large calibre; and one, the most weighty I remember to have seen, was constantly primed, as an alarm gun. About one o'clock one dark morning, I heard a distant gun at sea; in about ten minutes another, and at an equal interval a third: and then at last, the tremendous roar of the great gun on the fort, which shook every house in the town. After inquiring into the state of affairs, I went to my father's room, and, knocking at the door, with difficulty waked the inmates, and said, "Do not be alarmed, but the French are landing." I then mentioned that the alarm gun had been fired, that horsemen had been despatched for the troops at Ipswich, and that the drum on the quay was then beating to arms. He replied, "Well, my old fellow, you and I can do no good, or we would be among them; we must wait the event." I returned to his door in about three quarters of an hour, to tell him that the agitation was subsiding, and found him fast asleep. Whether the affair was a mere blunder, or there had been a concerted manœuvre to try the fencibles, we never could learn with certainty; but I remember that my father's coolness on the occasion, when we mentioned it next day, caused some suspicious shakings of the head among the ultra-loyalists of Aldborough.

But the time was now at hand that we were all to return finally to Leicestershire; and when, in the year 1805, we at length bade adieu to Suffolk, and travelled once more to Muston, my father had the full expectation that his changes of residence were at an end, and that he would finish his days in his own old parsonage. I must indulge myself, in closing this chapter, with part of the letter which he received, when on the eve of starting for Leicestershire, from the honoured rector of Sweffling:—

"It would be very little to my credit, if I could close, without much concern, a connection which has lasted nearly twelve years,—no inconsiderable part of human life,—and never was attended with a cross word or a cross thought. My parish has been attended to with exemplary care; I have experienced the greatest friendship and hospitality from you and Mrs. Crabbe; and I have never visited or left you without bringing away with me the means of improvement. And all this must return no more! Such are the awful conditions upon which the comforts of this life must be held. Accept, my dear sir, my best thanks for your whole conduct towards me, during the whole time of our connection, and my best wishes for a great increase of happiness to you and Mrs. Crabbe, in your removal to the performance of more immediate duties. Your own parishioners will, I am persuaded, be as much gratified by your residence amongst them as mine have been by your residence in Suffolk. Our personal intercourse must be somewhat diminished; yet, I hope, opportunities of seeing each other will arise, and if subjects of correspondence be less frequent, the knowledge of each other's and our families' welfare will always be acceptable information. Adieu, my dear sir, for the present. Your much obliged and faithful friend, R. TURNER."

CHAPTER VIII.

1805—1814.

Mr. Crabbe's second Residence at Muston—Publication of "The Parish Register"—Letters from Eminent Individuals—Visit to Cambridge—Appearance of "The Borough," and of the "Tales in Verse"—Letters to and from Sir Walter Scott and others—A Month in London—The Prince Regent at Belvoir—Death of Mrs. Crabbe—Mr. Crabbe's Removal from Leicestershire—Lines written at Glemham after my Mother's decease.

WHEN, in October, 1805, Mr. Crabbe resumed the charge of his own parish of Muston, he found some changes to vex him, and not the less, because he had too much reason to suspect that his long absence from his incumbency had been, partly at least, the cause of them. His cure had been served by respectable and diligent clergy-

having taken a view of life too minute, too humiliating, too painful, and too just, may have deprived his works of so extensive, or, at least, so brilliant, a popularity as some of his contemporaries have attained; but I venture to believe that there is no poet of his times who will stand higher in the opinion of posterity. He generally deals with 'the short and simple annals of the poor;' but he exhibits them with such a deep knowledge of human nature, with such general ease and simplicity, and such accurate force of expression—whether gay or pathetical,—as, in my humble judgment, no poet except Shakspeare, has excelled."

men, but they had been often changed, and some of them had never resided within the parish; and he felt that the binding influence of a settled and permanent minister had not been withdrawn for twelve years with impunity. A Wesleyan missionary had formed a thriving establishment in Muston, and the congregations at the parish church were no longer such as they had been of old. This much annoyed my father; and the warmth with which he began to preach against dissent only irritated himself and others, without bringing back disciples to the fold.

But the progress of the Wesleyans, of all sects the least unfriendly in feeling, as well as the least dissimilar in tenets, to the established church, was, after all, a slight vexation compared to what he underwent from witnessing the much more limited success of a disciple of Huntington in spreading in the same neighbourhood the pernicious fanaticism of his half-crazy master. The *social* and *moral* effects of that new mission were well calculated to excite not only regret, but indignation; and, among other distressing incidents, was the departure from his own household of two servants, a woman and a man, one of whom had been employed by him for twenty years. The man, a conceited ploughman, set up for a Huntingtonian preacher himself; and the woman, whose moral character had been sadly deteriorated since her adoption of the new lights, was at last obliged to be dismissed, in consequence of intolerable insolence. I mention these things, because they may throw light on some passages in my father's later poetry.

By the latter part of the year 1806, Mr. Crabbe had nearly completed his "Parish Register," and the shorter poems that accompanied it, and had prepared to add them to a new edition of his early works; and his desire to give his second son also the benefits of an academical education was, I ought to add, a principal motive for no longer delaying his re-appearance as a poet. He had been, as we have seen, promised, years before, in Suffolk, the high advantage of Mr. Fox's criticism; but now, when the manuscript was ready, he was in office, and in declining health; so that my father felt great reluctance to remind him of his promise. He wrote to the great statesman to say that he could not hope, under such circumstances, to occupy any portion of his valuable time, but that it would afford much gratification if he might be permitted to dedicate the forthcoming volume to Mr. Fox. That warm and energetic spirit, however, was not subdued by all the pressure of his high functions added to that of an incurable disease; and "he repeated an offer," says my father, in his preface, "which, though I had not presumed to expect, I was happy to receive." The manuscript was immediately sent to him at St. Anne's Hill; "and," continues Mr. Crabbe, "as I have the information from Lord Holland, and his Lordship's permission to inform my readers, the poem which I have named 'The Parish Register,' was heard by Mr. Fox, and it excited interest enough, by some of its parts, to gain for me the benefit of his judgment upon the whole. Whatever he approved the reader will readily believe I carefully retained; the parts he disliked are totally expunged, and others are substituted, which, I hope, resemble those more conformable to the taste of so admirable a judge. Nor can I deny myself the melancholy satisfaction of adding, that this poem (and more especially the story of Phœbe Dawson, with some parts of the second book), were the last compositions of their kind that engaged and amused the capacious, the candid, the benevolent mind of this great man." In the same preface my father acknowledges his obligations to Mr. Turner. "He, indeed," says Mr. Crabbe, "is the kind of critic for whom every poet should devoutly wish, and the friend whom every man would be happy to acquire. To this gentleman I am indebted more than I am able to express, or than he is willing to allow, for the time he has bestowed upon the attempts I have made."

This preface is dated Muston, September, 1807; and in the same month the volume was published by Mr. Hatchard. It contained, with the earlier series, "The Parish Register," "Sir Eustace Grey," "The Birth of Flattery," and other minor pieces; and its success was not only decided, but nearly unprecedented. By "The Parish Register," indeed, my father must be considered as having first assumed that station among British poets which the world has now settled to be peculiarly his own. The same character was afterwards still more strikingly exemplified and illustrated—but it was henceforth the same; whereas there was but little in the earlier series that could have led to the expectation of such a performance as "The Register." In the former works, a few minute descriptions had been introduced—but here there was nothing but a succession of such descriptions; in them there had been no tale—this was a chain of stories; they were didactic—here no moral inference is directly inculcated: finally, they were regularly constructed poems—this boldly defies any but the very slightest and most transparently artificial connections. Thus differing from his former self, his utter dissimilarity to any other author then enjoying public favour was still more striking; the manner of expression was as entirely his own as the singular minuteness of his delineation, and the strictness of his adherence to the literal truth of nature; and it was now universally admitted, that, with lesser peculiarities, he mingled the conscious strength, and, occasionally, the profound pathos, of a great original poet.

Nor was "Sir Eustace Grey" less admired

on other grounds, than "The Parish Register" was for the singular combination of excellences which I have been faintly alluding to, and which called forth the warmest eulogy of the most powerful critical authority of the time, which was moreover considered as the severest. The other periodical critics of the day agreed substantially with the "Edinburgh Review;" and I believe that within two days after the appearance of Mr. Jeffrey's admirable and generous article, Mr. Hatchard sold off the whole of the first edition of these poems.

Abundantly satisfied with the decision of professional critics, he was further encouraged by the approbation of some old friends and many distinguished individuals to whom he had sent copies of his work; and I must gratify myself by inserting a few of their letters to him on this occasion.

From Mr. Bonnycastle.

"Woolwich Common, Oct. 24, 1807.

"DEAR SIR,—Being from home when your kind letter, with a copy of your Poems, arrived, I had no opportunity of answering it sooner, as I should certainly otherwise have done. The pleasure of hearing from you, after a silence of more than twenty-eight years, made me little solicitous to inquire how it has happened that two persons, who have always mutually esteemed each other, should have no intercourse whatever for so long a period. It is sufficient that you are well and happy, and that you have not forgot your old friend; who, you may be assured, has never ceased to cherish the same friendly remembrance of you.—You are as well known in my family as you are pleased to say I am in yours; and whenever you may find it convenient to come to this part of the world, both you and yours may depend upon the most sincere and cordial reception. I have a daughter nearly twenty, a son upon the point of becoming an officer in the engineers, and two younger boys, who at this moment are deeply engaged in your poems, and highly desirous of seeing the author, of whom they have so often heard me speak. They are, of course, no great critics; but all beg me to say, that they are much pleased with your beautiful verses, which I promised to read to them again when they have done; having conceded to their eagerness the *prémices* of the treat. It affords me the greatest gratification to find that, in this world of chances, you are so comfortably and honourably established in your profession, and I sincerely hope your sons may be as well provided for. I spent a few days at Cambridge a short time since, and had I known they had been there, I should not have failed making myself known to them, as an old friend of their father's. For myself, I have had little to complain of, except the anxiety and fatigue attending the duties of my calling; but as I have lately succeeded to the place of Dr. Hutton, who has resigned the attendance at the academy, this has made it more easy, and my situation as respectable and pleasant as I could have any reason to expect. Life, as my friend Fuseli constantly repeats, is very short, therefore do not delay coming to see us any longer than you can possibly help. Be assured we shall all rejoice at the event. In the mean time, believe me, my dear Sir, your truly sincere friend, J. BONNYCASTLE."

From Mrs. Burke.[1]

"Beaconsfield, Nov. 30, 1807.

"SIR,—I am much ashamed to find that your very kind letter and very valuable present have remained so long unacknowledged. But the truth is, when I received them, I was far from well; and procrastination being one of my natural vices, I have deferred returning you my most sincere thanks for your gratifying my feelings, by your beautiful preface and poems. I have a full sense of their value and your attention. *Your friend* never lost sight of worth and abilities. He found them in you, and was most happy in having it in his power to bring them forward. I beg you, Sir, to believe, and to be assured, that your situation in life was not indifferent to me, and that it rejoices me to know that you are happy. I beg my compliments to Mrs. Crabbe, and my thanks for her remembering that I have had the pleasure of seeing her. I am, Sir, with great respect and esteem, &c.

"JANE BURKE."

From Dr. Mansel.[2]

"Trinity Lodge, Cambridge, Oct. 29, 1807.

"DEAR SIR,—I could not resist the pleasure of going completely through your delightful poems, before I returned you, as I now do, my best thanks for so truly valuable a proof of your remembrance. The testimony of my opinion is but of small importance, when set by the side of those which have already been given of this accession to our standard national poetry; but I must be allowed to say, that so much have I been delighted with the perusal of the incomparable descriptions which you have laid before me; with the easiness and purity of the diction, the knowledge of life and manners, and the vividness of that imagination which could produce, and so well sustain and keep up such charming scenes—that I have found it to be almost the only book of late times which I could read through without making it a sort of duty to do so. Once more, dear Sir, accept of my best thanks for this very flattering remembrance of me; and be assured of my being, with much regard, your faithful, &c.

"W. L. MANSEL."

From Earl Grey.

"Hertford Street, Feb. 28, 1808.

"SIR,—I have many excuses to offer for not having sooner returned my thanks for your letter of the 10th of October, and the valuable present which accompanied it. I did not receive it till I arrived in London, about the middle of the last month, and I waited till I should have had time—for which the first business of an opening session of parliament was not favourable—to read a work

[1] Of this lady, who died in 1812, Mr. Prior says:—"Added to affectionate admiration of Mr. Burke's talents, she possessed accomplishments, good sense, goodness of heart, and a sweetness of manners and disposition, which served to allay many of the anxieties of his career. He repeatedly declared, that 'every care vanished the moment he entered under his own roof.'"—*Life of Burke.*

[2] Afterwards Bishop of Bristol. His Lordship died in 1820.

from which I anticipated much pleasure. I am now able, at the same time, to offer you my best thanks in sending me the poems you have lately published, and to say that my admiration of the author of the 'Library,' has not been diminished by the perusal of the 'Parish Register,' and the other additional poems. But all other praise must appear insipid after that of Mr. Fox; and I will only add, that I think that highest praise, for such I esteem it, was justly due to you. I well remember the pleasure which I had in meeting you at Mr. Dudley North's, and wish I could look to a revival of it. I have the honour to be, with great regard, Sir, &c. GREY."

From Roger Wilbraham, Esq.

"Stratton Street, May 23, 1808.

"DEAR SIR,—Unless I had heard from our friend, Mr. North, that you had received complimentary letters from most of your friends on your late publication, I should not have thought of adding my name to the number. The only reason for my silence was the fear of assuming much more of a literary character than belongs to me; though, on the score of friendship for the author, and admiration of his works, I will not yield to the most intelligent and sagacious critic. Perhaps, indeed, an earlier letter from me might have been authorised by the various conversations we have had together at Glemham, in which I so frequently took the liberty to urge you not to rest contented with that sprig of bays which your former publications had justly acquired, but to aim at a larger branch of thicker foliage. This I can truly say, my dear Sir, you have obtained by universal consent; and I feel considerable pride in having the honour to be known to a person who has afforded so much real delight to a discerning public.—No, no, Sir, when we thought you idle, you were by no means so; you were observing man, and studying his character among the inferior orders of the community; and the varieties that belong to his character you have now described with the most perfect truth, and in the most captivating language. When I took up your book, the novelties of it first attracted my notice, and afterwards I visited my old acquaintances with as much pleasure as ever. The only regret I felt at the end was, that the book was not marked Vol. I.; but that may be amended. In which hope I take my leave, assuring you of the very sincere regard, and real admiration of, yours most truly and sincerely, ROGER WILBRAHAM."

From Mr. Canning.

"Stanhope Street, Nov. 13, 1807.

"SIR,—I have deferred acknowledging the civility of your letter, until I should at the same time acknowledge the pleasure which I had derived from the perusal of the volume which accompanied it. I have lately made that volume the companion of a journey into the country. I am now therefore able to appreciate the value of your present, as well as to thank you for your obliging attention in sending it to me. With some of the poems—the 'Village,' particularly—I had been long acquainted; but I was glad to have them brought back to my recollection; and I have read with no less pleasure and admiration those which I now saw for the first time. I have the honour to be, Sir, &c., &c.

"GEORGE CANNING."

From Lord Holland.

"SIR,—Having been upon a tour in Scotland, I did not receive your book till my arrival at York, and was unwilling to answer your very obliging letter till I had read the 'Parish Register' in print. I can assure you that its appearance in this dress has increased my opinion of its beauty: and, as you have done me, very undeservedly, the honour of calling me a judge of such matters, I will venture to say that it seems to me calculated to advance the reputation of the author of the 'Library' and the 'Village,' which, to any one acquainted with those two excellent poems, is saying a great deal. With regard to the very flattering things you are pleased to say of me, I am conscious that your willingness to oblige has blinded your judgment; but cannot conclude my letter without returning you thanks for such expressions of your partiality. I am, Sir, &c. HOLLAND."

To these I may add a letter from Mr. Walter Scott, dated "Ashestiel, October 21st, 1809," —acknowledging the receipt of a subsequent edition of the same volume.

"DEAR SIR,—I am just honoured with your letter, which gives me the more sensible pleasure, since it has gratified a wish of more than twenty years' standing. It is, I think, fully that time since I was, for great part of a very snowy winter, the inhabitant of an old house in the country, in a course of poetical study, so very like that of your admirably painted 'Young Lad,' that I could hardly help saying, 'That's me!' when I was reading the tale to my family. Among the very few books which fell under my hands was a volume or two of Dodsley's Annual Register, one of which contained copious extracts from 'The Village,' and 'The Library,' particularly the conclusion of book first of the former, and an extract from the latter, beginning with the description of the old Romancers. I committed them most faithfully to my memory, where your verses must have felt themselves very strangely lodged, in company with ghost stories, border riding-ballads, scraps of old plays, and all the miscellaneous stuff which a strong appetite for reading, with neither means nor discrimination for selection, had assembled in the head of a lad of eighteen. New publications, at that time, were very rare in Edinburgh, and my means of procuring them very limited; so that, after a long search for the poems which contained these beautiful specimens, and which had afforded me so much delight, I was fain to rest contented with the extracts from the Register, which I could repeat at this moment. You may, therefore, guess my sincere delight when I saw your poems at a later period assume the rank in the public consideration which they so well deserve. It was a triumph to my own immature taste to find I had anticipated the applause of the learned and of the critical, and I became very desirous to offer my *gratulor*, among the more important plaudits which you have had from every quarter. I should certainly have availed myself

of the freemasonry of authorship (for our trade may claim to be a mystery as well as Abhorson's) to address to you a copy of a new poetical attempt, which I have now upon the anvil, and I esteem myself particularly obliged to Mr. Hatchard, and to your goodness acting upon his information, for giving me the opportunity of paving the way for such a freedom. I am too proud of the compliments you honour me with, to affect to decline them; and with respect to the comparative view I have of my own labours and yours, I can only assure you, that none of my little folks, about the formation of whose taste and principles I may be supposed naturally solicitous, have ever read any of my own poems; while yours have been our regular evening's amusement. My eldest girl begins to read well, and enters as well into the humour as into the sentiment of your admirable descriptions of human life. As for rivalry, I think it has seldom existed among those who know, by experience, that there are much better things in the world than literary reputation, and that one of the best of these good things is the regard and friendship of those deservedly and generally esteemed for their worth or their talents. I believe many dilettanti authors do cocker themselves up into a great jealousy of anything that interferes with what they are pleased to call their fame; but I should as soon think of nursing one of my own fingers into a whitlow for my private amusement, as encouraging such a feeling. I am truly sorry to observe you mention bad health: those who contribute so much to the improvement as well as the delight of society should escape this evil. I hope, however, that one day your state of health may permit you to view this country. I have very few calls to London, but it will greatly add to the interest of those which may occur, that you will permit me the honour of waiting upon you in my journey, and assuring you, in person, of the early admiration and sincere respect with which I have the honour to be, dear Sir, yours, &c. WALTER SCOTT."

In the manly and sensible views of literature and literary fame expressed in the last of these letters, Mr. Crabbe fully concurred. He enjoyed the sweetness of well-earned credit; but at his mature years, and with his strong religious bias, he was little likely to be intoxicated with the applause of critics. His feelings on this occasion were either not perceptible, or only seen in those simple, open demonstrations of satisfaction which show that no proud exulting spirit lurks within. Of some men it is said, that they are too proud to be vain; but of him it might be said, that the candid manner in which he testified his satisfaction at success, was a proof that, while he felt the pleasure, he felt also its limited value—limited by the consciousness of defects; limited by the consciousness that there were higher, nearer, and dearer interests in life than those of poetical ambition. How gratifying is the contemplation of such success, when it is only accessory to the more substantial pleasures of existence, namely, the consciousness of having fulfilled the duties for which that existence was especially given, and the bright hope that higher and better things than this world can afford await those who have borne the trials of adversity and prosperity with a humble and pious spirit! How poor is such success when it is made "the pearl of great price!"

My brother now residing at Caius College, Cambridge, Mr. Crabbe more than once went thither, and remained a considerable time, dining in that college or Trinity every day, and passing his mornings chiefly in the botanic garden. The new poems, and the remarks of the Reviews, had brought him again under the public eye; so that he was now received, in that seat of learning, not only as a man who had formerly deserved the encouragements of literature, but as one of the popular writers of the day—became an object of attention and curiosity, and added many distinguished names to the number of his acquaintance.

On one occasion, happening to be at Cambridge during the Newmarket season, my father was driven by his son John in a tandem to the course; and though he booked no bets, I have reason to think he enjoyed his ride quite as much as many of the lads by whom he was surrounded. Ever tenacious of important points of morality, no one looked with a more enlarged and benignant eye upon such juvenilities; it always seemed to me as if his mind was incapable of seeing and apprehending the little in anything.

Our respected friend Donn, being one of the congregation of the celebrated Mr. Simeon, and having a sincere regard for my father, persuaded him to occupy his pew in Little St. Mary's; hoping, probably, that he might become a convert to his own views of religion. Accordingly, he took his seat there, and paid great attention to the sermon, and on his return from church wrote the substance of it, and preached it at Muston the following Sunday; telling his congregation where he had heard it, in what points he entirely assented to the opinions it contained, and where he felt compelled to differ from the pious author.

He also accompanied the worthy curator to the Book Society, consisting chiefly of inhabitants of the town; and they had the kindness to enrol his name as an honorary member. But few of his friends at Cambridge survive him; Dr. Mansel, Mr. Davis, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Tavel, and Mr. Donn, all died before him. Nowhere do we perceive the effects of time so evidently as in a visit to the universities.

In the beginning of 1809, Dr. Cartwright expressed a wish that my father would prepare some verses, to be repeated at the ensuing meeting of that admirable institution for the benefit of distressed authors, "The Literary Fund;" and it happened that a portion of a work then

on the stocks, "The Borough," was judged suitable for the occasion: with some additions, accordingly, it was sent, and spoken at the anniversary, with all the advantage that Mr. Fitzgerald gave to whatever he recited.

Mr. Crabbe was now diligently occupied in finishing this poem, which had been begun while he lived at Rendham; and as our kind friends at Aldborough had invited us to taste the sea air after four years' residence in the centre of the kingdom, my father carried his manuscript for completion, and for the inspection of that judicious friend at Great Yarmouth, without whose council he decided on nothing. Can it be questioned that he trod that beach again, to which he had so often returned after some pleasing event, with somewhat more of honest satisfaction, on account of the distinguished success of his late poems! The ferm exultation, however, could no longer be applicable; he was now an elderly clergyman, and much too deeply did he feel the responsibilities of life to be "carried off his feet," as the Duchess of Gordon playfully expressed it, by any worldly fascinations. Mr. Turner's opinion of "The Borough," was, upon the whole, highly favourable; but he intimated, that there were portions of the new work which might be liable to rough treatment from the critics, and his decision, in both its parts, was confirmed by the public voice. As soon as we returned to Muston, Mr. Hatchard put it to the press: it was published in 1810, and in 1816 it had attained its sixth edition.

The opinion of the leading Reviews was again nearly unanimous; agreeing that "The Borough" had greater beauties and greater defects than its predecessor, "The Parish Register." With such a decision an author may always be well pleased; for he is sure to take his rank with posterity by his beauties; defects, where there are great and real excellences, serve but to fill critical dissertations. In fact, though the character was still the same, and the blemishes sufficiently obvious, "The Borough" was a great spring upwards. The incidents and characters in "The Parish Register" are but excellent sketches:—there is hardly enough matter even in the most interesting description, not even in the story of Phœbe Dawson, to gain a firm hold of the reader's mind:—but, in the new publication, there was a sufficient evolution of event and character, not only to please the fancy, but grapple with the heart. I think the "Highwayman's Tale," in the twenty-third letter (Prisons), is an instance in point. We see the virtuous young man, the happy lover, and the despairing felon in succession, and enough of each state to give full force to its contrasts. I know that my father was himself much affected when he drew that picture, as he had been, by his own confession, twice before; once at a very early period (see the "Journal to Mira"), and again when he was describing the terrors of a poor distracted mind, in his Sir Eustace Grey. The tale of the Condemned Felon arose from the following circumstances:—while he was struggling with poverty in London, he had some reason to fear that the brother of a very intimate friend, a wild and desperate character, was in Newgate under condemnation for a robbery. Having obtained permission to see the man who bore the same name, a glance at once relieved his mind from the dread of beholding his friend's brother; but still he never forgot the being he then saw before him. He was pacing the cell, or small yard, with a quick and hurried step; his eye was as glazed and abstracted as that of a corpse:—

> "Since his dread sentence, nothing seem'd to be
> As once it was; seeing he could not see,
> Nor hearing hear aright . . . .
> Each sense was palsied!"

In the common-place book of the author the following observations were found relative to "The Borough;" and they apply perhaps with still more propriety to his succeeding poems:—"I have chiefly, if not exclusively, taken my subjects and characters from that order of society where the least display of vanity is generally to be found, which is placed between the humble and the great. It is in this class of mankind that more originality of character, more variety of fortune, will be met with; because, on the one hand, they do not live in the eye of the world, and, therefore, are not kept in awe by the dread of observation and indecorum; neither, on the other, are they debarred by their want of means from the cultivation of mind and the pursuits of wealth and ambition, which are necessary to the development of character displayed in the variety of situations to which this class is liable."

The preface to "The Borough" shows how much his mind was engrossed and irritated, at this period, by the prevalence of Mr. Huntington's injurious doctrines in his neighbourhood, and even in his household. And his "Letter on Sects" not only produced a ridiculous threat from a Swedenborgian (dated from Peterborough) of personal chastisement; but occasioned a controversy between the writer and the editor of the "Christian Observer," which appeared likely to become public. It ended, however, in mutual expressions of entire respect; and I am happy to think that the difference in their views was only such as different circumstances of education, &c. might cause between two sincere Christians.

"The Borough" was dedicated, in very grateful terms, to the present Duke of Rutland; from whom, and all the members of that noble family, more especially the Duchess Dowager, my father continued to receive polite attention during the

whole period of his residence at Muston. At Belvoir he enjoyed from time to time the opportunity of mixing with many public characters, who, if their pursuits and turn of mind differed widely from his own, were marked by the stamp and polish of perfect gentlemen; and no one could appreciate the charm of high manners more fully than he whose muse chose to depict, with rare exceptions, those of the humbler classes of society. He was particularly pleased and amused with the conversation of the celebrated "Beau Brummell."

My brother and I (now both clergymen), having curacies in the neighbourhood, still lived at Muston, and all the domestic habits which I have described at Glemham were continued, with little exception. My father having a larger and better garden than in Suffolk, passed much of his time amongst his choice weeds, and though (my mother growing infirm) we did not take a family walk as heretofore, yet in no other respect was that perfect domestication invaded. When the evening closed, winter or summer, my father read aloud from the store which Mr. Colburn, out of his circulating library, sent and renewed, and nineteen in every twenty of these books were as of old, novels; while, as regularly, my brother took up his pencil, and amused our unoccupied eyes by some design strikingly full of character; for he had an untaught talent in this way, which wanted only the mechanical portion of the art to give him a high name among the masters of the time. One winter he copied and coloured some hundreds of insects for his father, from expensive plates sent for his inspection by the Vice-Master of Trinity; and this requiring no genius but pains only, I joined in the employment. "Now, old fellows," said my father, "it is my duty to read to you."

The landscape around Muston was open and uninteresting. Here were no groves nor dry green lanes, nor gravel roads to tempt the pedestrian in all weather; but still the parsonage and its premises formed a pretty little oasis in the clayey desert. Our front windows looked full on the churchyard, by no means like the common forbidding receptacles of the dead, but truly ornamental ground; for some fine elms partially concealed the small beautiful church and its spire, while the eye, travelling through their stems, rested on the banks of a stream and a picturesque old bridge.[3] The garden enclosed the other two sides of this churchyard; but the crown of the whole was a gothic archway, cut through a thick hedge and many boughs, for through this opening, as in the deep frame of a picture, appeared, in the centre of the aërial canvass, the unrivalled Belvoir.

[3] See the lines on Muston in "The Borough," Letter I.:—

"Seek then thy garden's shrubby bound, and look
As it steals by, upon the bordering brook;
That winding streamlet, limpid, lingering, slow,
Where the reeds whisper when the zephyrs blow," &c.

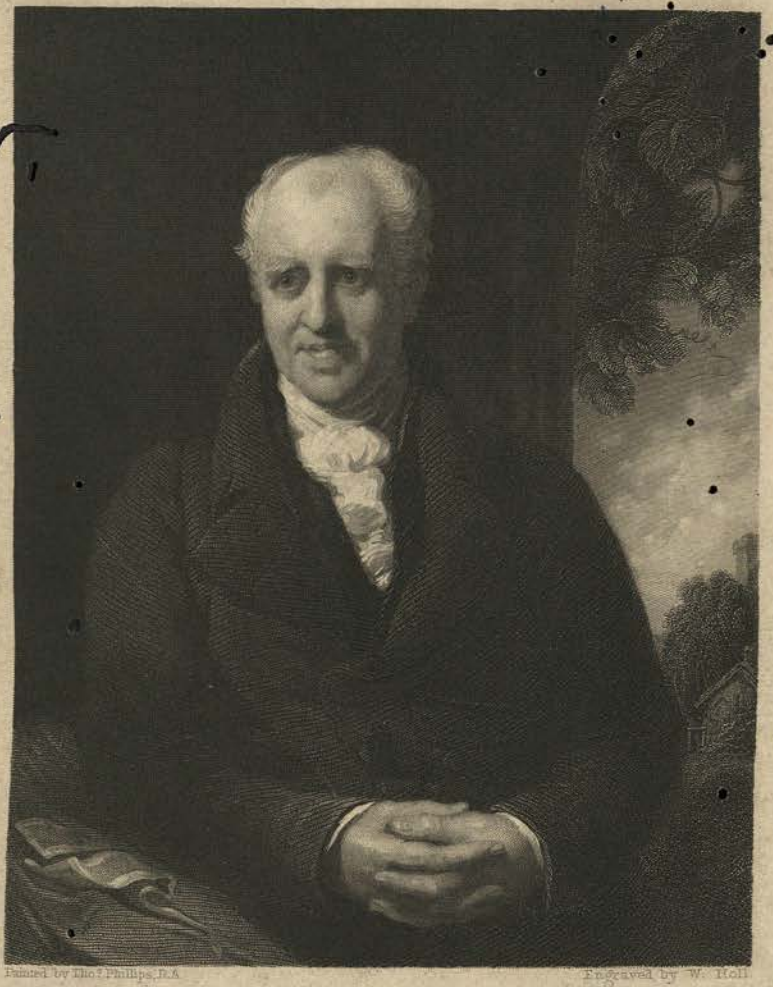
Though we lived just in the same domestic manner when alone, yet my father visited much more frequently than in Suffolk: besides the Castle, he occasionally dined at Sir Robert Heron's, Sir William Welby's, with Dr. Gordon, Dean of Lincoln, the Rector of the next village, and with others of the neighbouring clergy. And we had now and then a party at *our house*; but where the mistress is always in ill-health and the master a poet, there will seldom be found the nice tact to conduct these things just as they ought to be. My father was conscious of this; and it gave him an appearance of inhospitality quite foreign to his nature. If he neither shot nor danced, he appeared well pleased that we brought him a very respectable supply of game, and that we sometimes passed an evening at the assembly-room of our metropolis, Grantham. My mother's declining state becoming more evident, he was, if possible, more attentive to her comforts than ever. He would take up her meals when in her own room, and sometimes cook her some little nicety for supper, when he thought it would otherwise be spoiled. "What a father you have!" was a grateful exclamation often on her lips.

In the early part of the year 1812, Mr. Crabbe published—(with a dedication to the Duchess Dowager of Rutland)—his "Tales in Verse;" a work as striking as, and far less objectionable than, its predecessor, "The Borough;" for here no flimsy connection is attempted between subjects naturally separate; nor consequently, was there such temptation to compel into verse matters essentially prosaic. The new tales had also the advantage of ampler scope and development than his preceding ones. The public voice was again highly favourable, and some of these relations were spoken of with the utmost warmth of commendation; as, the "Parting Hour," "The Patron," "Edward Shore," and "The Confidant."

My father wrote a letter at the time to Mr. Scott, and sent him a copy of all his works. His brother poet honoured him with the following beautiful reply:—

"Abbotsford, June 1, 1812.

"My Dear Sir,—I have too long delayed to thank you for the most kind and acceptable present of your three volumes. Now am I doubly armed, since I have a set for my cabin at Abbotsford as well as in town; and, to say truth, the auxiliary copy arrived in good time, for my original one suffers as much by its general popularity among my young people as a popular candidate from the hugs and embraces of his democratical admirers. The clearness and accuracy of your painting, whether natural or moral, renders, I have often remarked, your works generally delightful to those whose youth might render them insensible to the other beauties with which they abound. There are a sort of pictures—surely the most valuable, were it but for that reason—which strike the uninitiated as much as



Painted by Thos? Phillips, R.A. Engraved by W. Holl.

REVP GEORGE CRABBE.

From a Picture in the possession of John Murray, Esq.

London, John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1860.

they do the connoisseur, though the last alone can render reason for his admiration. Indeed, our old friend Horace knew what he was saying, when he chose to address his ode, "*Virginibus puerisque*;" and so did Pope when he told somebody he had the mob on the side of his version of Homer, and did not mind the high-flying critics at Button's. After all, if a faultless poem could be produced, I am satisfied it would tire the critics themselves, and annoy the whole reading world with the spleen.

"You must be delightfully situated in the Vale of Belvoir—a part of England for which I entertain a special kindness, for the sake of the gallant hero, Robin Hood, who, as probably you will readily guess, is no small favourite of mine; his indistinct ideas concerning the doctrine of *meum* and *tuum* being no great objection to an outriding borderer. I am happy to think that your station is under the protection of the Rutland family, of whom fame speaks highly. Our lord of the 'cairn and the scaur' waste wilderness and hundred hills, for many a league round, is the Duke of Buccleugh, the head of my clan; a kind and benevolent landlord, a warm and zealous friend, and the husband of a lady, 'comme il y en a peu.' They are both great admirers of Mr. Crabbe's poetry, and would be happy to know him, should he ever come to Scotland, and venture into the Gothic halls of a border chief. The early and uniform kindness of this family, with the friendship of the late and present Lord Melville, enabled me, some years ago, to exchange my toils as a barrister for the lucrative and respectable situation of one of the clerks of our supreme court, which only requires a certain routine of official duty, neither laborious nor calling for any exertion of the mind. So that my time is entirely at my own command, except when I am attending the court, which seldom occupies more than two hours of the morning during sitting. I besides hold *in commendam* the sheriffdom of Ettrick Forest,—which is now no forest;—so that I am a sort of pluralist as to law appointments, and have, as Dogberry says, two gowns, and every thing handsome about me. I have often thought it is the most fortunate thing for bards like you and me, to have an established profession and professional character, to render us independent of those worthy gentlemen, the retailers, or, as some have called them, the midwives of literature, who are so much taken up with the abortions they bring into the world, that they are scarcely able to bestow the proper care upon young and flourishing babes like ours. That, however, is only a mercantile way of looking at the matter; but did any of my sons show poetical talent, of which, to my great satisfaction, there are no appearances, the first thing I should do, would be to inculcate upon him the duty of cultivating some honourable profession, and qualify himself to play a more respectable part in society than the mere poet. And as the best corollary of my doctrine, I would make him get your tale of 'The Patron,' by heart from beginning to end. It is curious enough that you should have republished the 'Village' for the purpose of sending your young men to college, and I should have written the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' for the purpose of buying a new horse for the Volunteer Cavalry. I must now send this scrawl into town to get a frank, for God knows it is not worthy of postage. With the warmest wishes for your health, prosperity, and increase of fame—though it needs not,—I remain most sincerely and affectionately, yours, WALTER SCOTT."

My father's answer to this kind communication has been placed in my hands; and I feel convinced that no offence will be taken by any one at an extract which I am about to give from it. The reader will presently discover, that my father had no real cause to doubt the regard of the noble person to whom he alludes, and who subsequently proved a most efficient patron and friend. Mr. Crabbe says to Sir Walter,—

"Accept my very sincere congratulations on your clerkship, and all things beside which you have had the goodness to inform me of. It is indeed very pleasant to me to find that the author of works that give me and thousands delight, is so totally independent of the midwives you speak of. Moreover, I give you joy of an honourable intercourse with the noble family of Buccleugh, whom you happily describe to me, and by whose notice or rather notice of my book, I am much favoured. With respect to my delightful situation in the Vale of Belvoir, and under the very shade of the castle, I will not say that your imagination has created its beauties, but I must confess it has enlarged and adorned them. The Vale of Belvoir is flat and unwooded, and save that an artificial straight-lined piece of water, and one or two small streams, intersect it, there is no other variety than is made by the different crops, wheat, barley, beans. The castle, however, is a noble place, and stands on one entire hill, taking up its whole surface, and has a fine appearance from the window of my parsonage, at which I now sit, at about a mile and a half distance. The duke also is a duke-like man, and the duchess a very excellent lady. They have great possessions, and great patronage, *but*—you see this unlucky particle, in one or other of Horne Tooke's senses, will occur—*but* I am now of the *old race*. And what then?—Well, I will explain. Thirty years since I was taken to Belvoir by its late possessor, as a domestic chaplain. I read the service on a Sunday, and fared sumptuously every day. At that time, the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, gave me a rectory in Dorsetshire, small, but a living; this the duke taught me to disregard as a provision, and promised better things. While I lived with him on this pleasant footing I observed many persons in the neighbourhood who came occasionally to dine, and were civilly received: 'How do you do, Dr. Smith? How is Mrs. Smith?'—'I thank your Grace, well:' and so they took their venison and claret. 'Who are these?' said I to a young friend of the duke's. 'Men of the *old race*, Sir; people whom the *old duke* was in the habit of seeing—for some of them he had done something, and had he yet lived all had their chance. They now make way for us, but keep up a sort of connection.' The son of the *old duke* of that day and I were of an age to a week; and with the wisdom of a young man I looked distantly on his death and my own. I went into Suffolk and married, with decent views, and prospects of views

more enlarging. His Grace went into Ireland—and died. Mrs. Crabbe and I philosophised as well as we could; and after some three or four years, Lord Thurlow, once more at the request of the Duchess Dowager, gave me the crown livings I now hold, on my resignation of that in Dorsetshire. They were at that time worth about 70*l.* or 80*l.* a-year more than that, and now bring me about 400*l.*; but a long minority ensued,—new connections were formed; and when, some few years since, I came back into this country, and expressed a desire of inscribing my verses to the duke, I obtained leave, indeed, but I almost repented the attempt, from the coldness of the reply. Yet, recollecting that great men are beset with applicants of all kinds, I acquitted the duke of injustice, and determined to withdraw myself, as one of the *old race*, and give way to stronger candidates for notice. To this resolution I kept strictly, and left it entirely to the family whether or no I should consider myself as a stranger, who, having been disappointed in his expectation, by unforeseen events, must take his chance, and ought to take it patiently. For reasons I have no inclination to canvass, his Grace has obligingly invited me, and I occasionally meet his friends at the castle, without knowing whether I am to consider that notice as the promise of favour, or as favour in itself.—I have two sons, both in orders, partly from a promise given to Mrs. Crabbe's family that I would bring them up precisely alike, and partly because I did not know what else to do with them. They will share a family property that will keep them from piming upon a curacy. And what more?—I must not perplex myself with conjecturing. You find, Sir, that you are much the greater man; for except what Mr. Hatchard puts into my privy purse, I doubt whether 600*l.* be not my total receipts; but he at present helps us, and my boys being no longer at college, I can take my wine without absolutely repining at the enormity of the cost. I fully agree with you respecting the necessity of a profession for a youth of moderate fortune. Woe to the lad of genius without it! and I am flattered by what you mention of my *Patron*. Your praise is current coin."

In the summer of 1813, my mother, though in a very declining state of health, having a strong inclination to see London once more, a friend in town procured us those very eligible rooms for sight-seers, in Osborne's Hotel, Adelphi, which were afterwards occupied by their sable majesties of Otaheite. We entered London in the beginning of July, and returned at the end of September. My mother being too infirm to accompany us in our pedestrian expeditions, they were sometimes protracted to a late hour, and then we dropped in and dined at any coffee-house that was near. My father's favourite resorts were the botanic gardens, where he passed many hours; and in the evenings he sometimes accompanied us to one of the minor theatres, the larger being closed. He did not seem so much interested by theatrical talent as I had expected; but he was one evening infinitely diverted at the Lyceum by Liston's Solomon Wiseacre, in "Sharp and Flat," especially where he reads the letter of his dear Dorothy Dimple, and applies his handkerchief to his eyes, saying, "It is very foolish, but I cannot help it." He pronounced Liston "a true genius in his way."

Mr. Dudley North called upon my father, and he had again the pleasure of renewing his intercourse with that early friend and patron, dining with him several times during our stay.

One morning, to our great satisfaction, the servant announced Mr. Bonnycastle. A fine, tall, elderly man cordially shook hands with my father; and we had, for the first time, the satisfaction of seeing one whose name had been from childhood familiar to us. He and my father had, from some accidental impediment, not seen one another since their days of poverty, and trial, and drudgery; and now, after thirty-three years, when they met again, both were in comparative affluence, both had acquired a name and reputation, and both were in health. Such meetings rarely occur. He entertained us with a succession of anecdotes, admirably told, and my father went as frequently to Woolwich as other engagements would permit.

I have already mentioned, that, ever mindful when in town of his early struggle and providential deliverance, he sedulously sought out some objects of real distress. He now went to the King's Bench, and heard the circumstances that incarcerated several of the inmates, and rejoiced in administering the little relief he could afford. We were not with him on these occasions; but I knew incidentally that he was several mornings engaged in this way.

Soon after our return to Muston, my father was requested by the Rev. Dr. Brunton, of Edinburgh, the husband of the celebrated novelist, to contribute to a new collection of psalmody, then contemplated by some leading clergymen of the Church of Scotland. He consulted Sir Walter Scott, and received the following interesting letter:—

"My dear Sir,—I was favoured with your kind letter some time ago. Of all people in the world, I am least entitled to demand regularity of correspondence; for being, one way and another, doomed to a great deal more writing than suits my indolence, I am sometimes tempted to envy the reverend hermit of Prague, confessor to the niece of Queen Gorboduc, who never saw either pen or ink. Mr. Brunton is a very respectable clergyman of Edinburgh, and I believe the work in which he has solicited your assistance is one adopted by the General Assembly, or Convocation, of the Kirk. I have no notion that he has any individual interest in it: he is a well-educated and liberal-minded man, and generally esteemed. I have no particular acquaintance with him myself, though we speak together. He is at this very moment sitting on the outside of the bar of our supreme court, within which I am fagging as a clerk; but as he is hear-

ing the opinion of the judges upon an action for augmention of stipend to him and to his brethren, it would not, I conceive, be a very favourable time to canvass a literary topic. But you are quite safe with him; and having so much command of scriptural language, which appears to me essential to the devotional poetry of Christians, I am sure you can assist his purpose much more than any man alive.

"I think those hymns which do not immediately recall the warm and exalted language of the Bible are apt to be, however elegant, rather cold and flat for the purposes of devotion. You will readily believe that I do not approve of the vague and indiscriminate scripture language which the fanatics of old and the modern Methodists have adopted; but merely that solemnity and peculiarity of diction, which at once puts the reader and hearer upon his guard as to the purpose of the poetry. To my Gothic ear, indeed, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Dies Iræ*, and some of the other hymns of the Catholic church, are more solemn and affecting than the fine classical poetry of Buchanan: the one has the gloomy dignity of a Gothic church, and reminds us instantly of the worship to which it is dedicated; the other is more like a Pagan temple, recalling to our memory the classical and fabulous deities. This is, probably, all referable to the association of ideas—that is, if 'the association of ideas' continues to be the universal pick-lock of all metaphysical difficulties, as it was when I studied moral philosophy,—or to any other more fashionable universal solvent which may have succeeded to it in reputation. Adieu, my dear Sir. I hope you and your family will long enjoy all happiness and prosperity. Never be discouraged from the constant use of your charming talent. The opinions of reviewers are really too contradictory to found anything upon them, whether they are favourable or otherwise; for it is usually their principal object to display the abilities of the writers of the critical lucubrations themselves. Your Tales are universally admired here. I go but little out, but the few judges whose opinions I have been accustomed to look up to are unanimous. Ever yours, most truly,

"WALTER SCOTT."

I know not whether my father ever ventured to engage in the work patronised by Dr. Brunton. That same autumn, an event occurred which broke up the family, and spoiled, if it did not entirely terminate, the domestic habits of years. My mother died October 21st, in her sixty-third year, and was buried in the chancel of Muston. During a long period before her departure, her mind had been somewhat impaired by bodily infirmities; and at last it sank under the severity of the disease. She possessed naturally a great share of penetration and acuteness; a firm unflinching spirit, and a very warm and feeling heart. She knew the worth of her husband, and was grateful for his kindness; for she had only to express her wishes, and his own inclinations, if at variance, were cheerfully sacrificed. "Never," said her own sister, "was there a better husband, except that he was too indulgent." But so large a portion of her married life was clouded by her lamentable disorder, that I find written by my father on the outside of a beautiful letter of her own, dated long before this calamity, "Nothing can be more sincere than this, nothing more reasonable and affectionate; and yet happiness was denied."

Perhaps, it was a fortunate circumstance for my father, that anxiety and sorrow brought on an alarming illness two days after her decease; for any other calamity occurring at the same time with this heaviest of human ills, divides and diverts its sting. And yet, I am not sure that his own danger had this absorbing effect; for he appeared regardless of life, and desired, with the utmost coolness, that my mother's grave might not be closed till it was seen whether he should recover. The disease bore a considerable resemblance to acute cholera without sickness, and was evidently, at last, carrying him off rapidly. At length emetics were fortunately tried, although he had always a great aversion to this species of medicine, and the effect was palpably beneficial, though his recovery was very gradual. His demeanour, while the danger lasted, was that of perfect humility, but of calm hope, and unshaken firmness.

A very short time after he resumed his duties, a letter arrived from the Duke of Rutland, offering him the living of Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, of which his Grace had the alternate presentation. To this offer, of which the Duke had at first rather mistaken the value, as compared with Muston, &c., and which my father had, though with much gratitude, hesitated to accept, his noble patron afterwards added that of the incumbency of Croxton, near Belvoir; and, the proposition being then accepted, we prepared to vacate Muston. And my father looked to a new residence without that feeling of regret which generally accompanies even an advantageous removal in later life; for, with a strong attachment to some very friendly and estimable individuals in the vicinity, he felt the change produced by the late event in every part of the house and premises. His garden had become indifferent to him, nor was that occupation ever resumed again: besides, that diversity of religious sentiment, which I mentioned before, had produced a coolness in some of his parishioners, which he felt the more painfully, because, whatever might be their difference of opinion, he was ever ready to help and oblige them all by medical and other aid to the utmost extent of his power. They carried this unkind feeling so far as to ring the bells for his successor, before he himself had left the residence.

Before he quitted Leicestershire he witnessed a scene of hospitality at the castle which has not often been exceeded in magnificence. In January, 1814, the infant heir of the House of

Rutland was publicly baptized in the chapel of Belvoir, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Manners Sutton, himself a near branch of the ducal family, and of whom my father was accustomed to say, that he carried as much personal grace and dignity about with him as any individual he ever met with. On this high occasion the Prince Regent and Duke of York were present as sponsors. A variety of magnificent entertainments ensued; and my father, who was one of the company, had the honour of being presented, for the second time, to his late Majesty, and to the Duke of York, by both of whom he was received in a very flattering manner.

Before finally quitting Leicestershire, my father paid a short visit to his sister at Aldborough, from whom he was about to be still more widely divided; and one day was given to a solitary ramble among the scenery of bygone years—Parham and the woods of Glemham, then in the first blossom of May. He did not return until night; and in his note-book I find the following brief record of this mournful visit:—

"Yes, I behold again the place,
The seat of joy, the source of pain;
It brings in view the form and face
That I must never see again.

The night-bird's song that sweetly floats
On this soft gloom—this balmy air,
Brings to the mind her sweeter notes
That I again must never hear.

Lo! yonder shines that window's light,
My guide, my token, heretofore;
And now again it shines as bright,
When those dear eyes can shine no more.

Then hurry from this place away!
It gives not now the bliss it gave;
For Death has made its charm his prey,
And joy is buried in her grave."

I may introduce, in connection with the above, some lines which were long afterwards found written on a paper in which my dear mother's wedding-ring, nearly worn through before she died, was wrapped:—

"The ring so worn, as you behold,
So thin, so pale, is yet of gold:
The passion such it was to prove;
Worn with life's cares, love yet was love."

On the 3rd of June, 1814, he was inducted to Trowbridge church by the Rev. Mr. Fletcher. His diary, has, among others, the following very brief entries:—"5th June,—first sermon at Trowbridge. 8th, Evening,—solitary walk—night—change of opinion—easier, better, happier." To what these last words refer, I shall not guess; but I well remember that, even after he had mingled with the lively society of Trowbridge, he was subject to very distressing fits of melancholy. My brother and I did not for some little time follow him to that place. The evening of our arrival, seeing us conversing cheerfully as we walked together in the garden before his window, it seemed to have brought back to his memory the times when he was not alone: for happening to look up, I saw him regarding us very earnestly, and he appeared deeply affected. That connection had been broken, which no other relationship can supply. These visitations of depression were, however, gradually softened;—he became contented and cheerful, and I hope I may add, positively happy.

CHAPTER IX.

1814—1819.

Mr. Crabbe's Residence and Habits of Life at Trowbridge—His Study of Fossils—His Correspondence with Mary Leadbeater—His Journal kept during a Visit to London—Letters to and from Mr. Crabbe—His "Tales of the Hall," etc.

When my brother and myself arrived, on the occasion already alluded to, within a mile of Trowbridge, my father appeared on the road, having walked out to meet us; and, as he returned with us in the chaise, the manner in which he pointed out various houses to our notice satisfied us that he had met with a very gratifying reception among the principal inhabitants of his new parish. On the very night of his coming to Trowbridge, he had been most cordially received by the family of the late Mr. Waldron; and there, but not there only, we found the foundations already laid of intimacy, that soon ripened into friendship which death alone could break; for such casual variations of humour as he was subject to, serve only to prove the strength of the sentiment that survived them.

We were soon satisfied that Mr. Crabbe had made a wise and happy choice in this change of residence. While my mother lived, her infirm health forbade her mingling much in society, nor, with her to care for, did he often miss it; but he was naturally disposed for, and calculated to find pleasure in, social intercourse; and after his great loss, the loneliness of Muston began to depress him seriously. In answering the Duke of Rutland's kind letter, offering him the rectory of Trowbridge, he said, "It is too true that Muston is no longer what it has been to me: here I am now a solitary with a social disposition,—a hermit without a hermit's resignation." What wonder that he was healthfully excited by the warm reception he was now experiencing among the most cultivated families of Trowbridge and its vicinity: by the attractive attentions of the young and gay among them, in particular, who, finding the old satirist in many things very different from what they had looked

for, hastened to show a manifest partiality for his manners, as well as admiration of his talents? We were surprised, certainly, as well as delighted, to observe the tempered exuberance to which, ere many weeks had passed, his spirits, lately so sombre and desponding, were raised,—how lively and cheerful he appeared in every company, pleased with all about him, and evidently imparting pleasure wherever he went.

But a physical change that occurred in his constitution, at the time of the severe illness that followed close on my mother's death, had, I believe, a great share in all these happy symptoms. It always seemed to be his own opinion that at that crisis his system had, by a violent effort, thrown off some weight or obstruction which had been, for many years previously, giving his bodily condition the appearances of a gradual decline,—afflicting him with occasional fits of low fever, and vexatiously disordering his digestive organs. In those days, "life is as tedious as a twice-told tale," was an expression not seldom in his mouth; and he once told me, he felt that he could not possibly live more than six or seven years. But now it seemed that he had recovered not only the enjoyment of sound health, but much of the vigour and spirit of youthful feelings. Such a renovation of health and strength at sixty is rare enough; and never, I believe, occurs unless there has been much temperance in the early period of life. Perhaps, he had never looked so well, in many respects, as he did about this time; his temples getting more bare, the height of his well-developed forehead appeared as increased, and more than ever like one of those heads by which Wilkie makes so many converts to the beauty of human decay. He became stouter in person than he had been, though without fatness; and, although he began to stoop, his limbs and motions were strong and active.

Notwithstanding his flattering reception among the principal people of the place, he was far from being much liked, for some years, by his new parishioners in general: nor, in truth, is it at all difficult to account for this. His immediate predecessor, the curate of the previous rector, had been endeared to the more serious inhabitants by warm zeal and a powerful talent for preaching extempore, and had moreover, been so universally respected, that the town petitioned the Duke of Rutland to give him the living. His Grace's refusal had irritated many even of those who took little interest in the qualifications of their pastor, and engendered a feeling bordering on ill-will, towards Mr. Crabbe himself, which was heightened by the prevalence of some reports so ridiculous, that I am almost ashamed to notice them; such as, that he was a dissipated man—a dandy—even a gambler. And then, when he appeared among them, the perfect openness of his nature,—that, perhaps, impolitic frankness which made him at all times scorn the assumption of a scruple which he did not really feel, led him to violate occasionally, what were considered, among many classes in that neighbourhood, the settled laws of clerical decorum. For example, though little delighting in such scenes, except as they were partaken by kind and partial friends, he might be seen occasionally at a concert, a ball, or even a play. Then, even in the exercise of his unwearied and extensive charity, he often so conducted himself as to neutralise, in coarse and bad minds, all the natural movements of gratitude; mixing the clergyman too much with the almsgiver, and reading a lecture, the severity of which, however just, was more thought of than the benefaction it accompanied. He, moreover, soon after his arrival, espoused the cause of a candidate for the county representation, to whom the manufacturing interest, the prevalent one in his parish, was extremely hostile. Lastly, to conclude this long list, Mr. Crabbe, in a town remarkable for diversity of sects and warmth of discussion, adhered for a season unchanged to the same view of scriptural doctrines which had latterly found little favour even at Muston. As he has told us of his own Rector, in the Tales of the Hall:—

> "'A moral teacher!' some contemptuous cried;
> He smiled, but nothing of the fact denied
> Nor, save by his fair life, to charge so strong replied.
> Still, though he bade them not on aught rely
> That was their own, but all their worth deny,
> They call'd his pure advice his cold morality.
> 'Heathens,' they said, 'can tell us right from wrong,
> But to a Christian higher points belong.'"

But, while these things were against him, there were two or three traits in his character which wrought slowly, but steadily, in his favour. One was his boldness and uncompromising perseverance in the midst of opposition and reproach. During the violence of that contested election, while the few friends of Mr. Benett were almost in danger of their lives, he was twice assailed by a mob of his parishioners, with hisses and the most virulent abuse. He replied to their formidable menaces by "rating them roundly;" and though he was induced to retire by the advice of some friends, who hastened to his succour, yet this made no change in his vote, habits, or conduct. He continued to support Mr. Benett; he walked in the streets always alone, and just as frequently as before; and spoke as fearlessly. Mr. Canon Bowles says, in a letter to the present writer,—

"A riotous, tumultuous, and most appalling mob, at the time of election, besieged his house, when a chaise was at the door, to prevent his going to the poll and giving his vote in favour of my most worthy friend, John Benett of Pyt House, the present member for the county. The mob

threatened to destroy the chaise and tear him to pieces, if he attempted to set out. In the face of the furious assemblage, he came out calmly, told them they might kill him if they chose, but, whilst alive, nothing should prevent his giving a vote at the election, according to his promise and principles, and set off, undisturbed and unhurt, to vote for Mr. Benett."

He manifested the same decision respecting his religious opinions; for one or two reproachful letters made no impression, nor altered his language in the least. Such firmness, where it is the effect of principle, is sure to gain respect from all Englishmen. But mildness was as natural to him as his fortitude; and this, of course, had a tendency to appease enmity even at its height. A benevolent gentle heart was seen in his manner and countenance, and no occasional hastiness of temper could conceal it; —and then it soon became known that no one left his house unrelieved.

But, above all, the liberality of his conduct with respect to dissenters brought a counter-current in his favour. Though he was warmly attached to the established church, he held that

> "A man's opinion was his own, his due
> And just possession, whether false or true;"[1]

and in all his intercourse with his much-divided parishioners he acted upon this principle, visiting and dealing indiscriminately, and joining the ministers of the various denominations in every good work. In the course of a few years, therefore, not only all opposition died away, but he became generally and cordially esteemed. They who differed from him admitted that he had a right also to his own religious and political opinions. His integrity and benevolence were justly appreciated; his talents acknowledged, and his disposition loved.

In the spring of 1815, my brother and I, thinking it probable that we might soon settle for life, each in some village parsonage, and that this was the only opportunity of seeing something of our native country—leaving my father in sound health and among attached friends, absorbed by his duties, his new connections and amusements, — quitted Trowbridge about the the same time, and continued absent from it, sometimes in London together, sometimes apart in distant places in the kingdom, for nearly two years. In that interval, though we constantly corresponded. I saw my father only twice.

Calling, one day, at Mr. Hatchard's, in Piccadilly, he said, "Look round," and pointed to his inner room; and there stood my father, reading intently, as his manner was—with his knees somewhat bent, insensible to all around him. How homelike was the sight of that venerable white head among a world of strangers! He was engaged, and I was leaving town; and, after appointing a day to meet at Beccles, and a short cheerful half hour, we parted.

When the time arrived, he joined my brother and me at Beccles, at the house of his kind sister-in-law, Miss Elmy; where, after staying about a-week, and being introduced to Lady Byron, who attracted his just admiration, he left us *viâ* Aldborough, and returned into Wiltshire. This was about the end of October, 1816.

I cannot pass this date—October, 1816—without offering a remark or two, suggested by my father's diary and note-book of that period. He was peculiarly fond of the society and correspondence of females: all his most intimate friends, I think, were ladies; and I believe no better proof could be given of the delicacy and purity of his mind and character. He loved the very failings of the female mind: men in general appeared to him too stern, reserved, unyielding, and worldly; and he ever found relief in the gentleness, the tenderness, and the unselfishness of woman. Many of his chosen female friends were married, but this was not uniformly the case; and will it seem wonderful, when we consider how he was situated at this time, that with a most affectionate heart, a peculiar attachment to female society, and with unwasted passions, Mr. Crabbe, though in his sixty-second year, should have again thought of marriage? He could say with Shakspeare's good old Adam, —I quote lines which, for their surpassing beauty, he himself never could read steadily,—

> "Though I look old, yet am I strong and lusty;
> For in my youth I never did apply
> Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood;
> Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
> The means of weakness and debility:
> Therefore, my age is as a lusty winter,
> Frosty but kindly."

Moreover, a poet's mind is proverbially always young. If, therefore, youth and beauty could more than once warm his imagination to outrun his prudence—for, surely, the union of youth and beauty with a man of such age can never be *wise*—I feel satisfied that no one will be seriously shocked with such an evidence of the freshness of his feelings. The critics of his last publication bestowed some good-natured raillery on the warmth with which he there expressed himself on certain subjects—the increased tenderness of his love-scenes especially—and there occurred various incidents in his own later his-

[1] He wrote thus to a friend on the subject:—"Thousands and tens of thousands of sincere and earnest believers in the Gospel of our Lord, and in the general contents of Scripture, seeking its meaning with veneration and prayer, agree, I cannot doubt, in essentials, but differ in many points, and in some which unwise and uncharitable persons deem of much importance; nay, think that there is no salvation without them. Look at the good—good, comparatively speaking—just, pure, pious; the patient and suffering amongst recorded characters—and were not they of different opinions in many articles of their faith? and can we suppose their heavenly Father will select from this number a few, a very few, and that for their assent to certain tenets, which causes, independent of any merit of their own, in all probability, led them to embrace?"

tory that might afford his friends fair matter for a little innocent jesting: but none that knew him ever regarded him with less respect on account of this pardonable sort of weakness; and though *love* might be out of the question, I believe he inspired feelings of no ordinary regard in more than one of the fair objects of his vain devotion. These things were so well known among the circle of which at this period he formed the delight and ornament, that I thought it absurd not to allude to them. I have, however, no great wish to dwell on the subject; though, I must add, it was one that never for a moment disturbed the tranquillity of his family; nay, that, on one occasion at least, my brother and myself looked with sincere pleasure to the prospect of seeing our father's happiness increased by a new alliance.

Whether the two following sets of stanzas refer to the same period, I have not been curious to inquire. It is even possible that I may be wrong in suspecting any allusion to his personal feelings.

I.

"Unhappy is the wretch who feels
The trembling lover's ardent flame,
And yet the treacherous hope conceals
By using Friendship's colder name.

He must the lover's pangs endure,
And still the outward sign suppress;
Nor may expect the smiles that cure
The wounded heart's concealed distress.

When her soft looks on others bend,
By him discern'd, to him denied,
He must be then the silent friend,
And all his jealous torments hide.

When she shall one blest youth select,
His bleeding heart must still approve;
Must every angry thought correct,
And strive to like, where she can love.

Heaven from my heart such pangs remove,
And let these feverish sufferings cease—
These pains without the hope of love,
These cares of friendship, not its peace."

II.

"And wilt thou never smile again;
Thy cruel purpose never shaken?
Hast thou no feeling for my pain,
Refuse'd, disdain'd, despised, forsaken?

Thy uncle, crafty, careful, cold,
His wealth upon my mind imprinted;
His fields described, and praised his fold,
And jested, boasted, promised, hinted.

Thy aunt—I scorn'd the omen—spoke
Of lovers by thy scorn rejected;
But I the warning never took
When chosen, cheer'd, received, respected.

Thy brother, too—but all was plann'd
To murder peace—all freely granted;
And then I lived in fairy land,
Transported, bless'd, enrapt, enchanted.

Oh, what a dream of happy love!
From which the wise in time awaken;
While I must all its anguish prove,
Deceived, despised, abused, forsaken!"

I am persuaded that but few men have, even in early life, tasted either of the happiness or the pain which attend the most exquisite of passions, in such extremes as my father experienced at this period of his life. In his young "true love," indeed, he was so soon assured of a full return, that one side of the picture could scarcely have been then revealed to his view; and I cannot but consider it as a very interesting trait in the history of his mind, that he was capable at so late a stage, of feeling, with regard to the other side of it, so exactly as a man of five-and-twenty would have done under the same circumstances.

But my brother, in December, 1816, married, with his entire approbation, the daughter of the late William Crowfoot, Esq., and sister to the present Dr. Crowfoot, of Beccles, and immediately came to reside as his curate at Trowbridge, thus relieving him from much of the fatigue of his professional duties, as well as from domestic cares and the weariness of a solitary house. Soon after this I again joined the family; and early in 1817, my father had the satisfaction of marrying me to the daughter of the late Thomas Timbrell, Esq., of Trowbridge, and of seeing my wife and myself established, within twenty miles of him, in the curacy of Pucklechurch; where, during the rest of his life, he had always at his command a second, and, what was often refreshing to him, a rural home.

In relating my own impressions of my father, I have often been apprehensive that I have described him in terms which those who did not know him may deem exaggeration; yet am I supported by the testimony, not only of many who were well acquainted with his worth, but of one who knew him not, except by his publications and his letters. The talented individual who began the following correspondence, which was continued till her death in 1826, read and appreciated his character nearly as well as the most intimate of his friends. The daughter of Richard Shackleton, the intimate friend of Burke, had met my father at Mr. Burke's table in the year 1784, when, just after his marriage, he had the pleasure of introducing his bride to his patron. This distinguished lady possessed that superiority of intellect which marked her family, and was evidently honoured by Mr. Burke, not merely as the daughter of his old friend, but as one worthy to enjoy that high title herself. Her correspondence with Mr. Burke forms an interesting feature in Mr. Prior's able work. She was a poet, though not of the highest class, and sent to her eminent friend some pleasing verses on his residence at Beaconsfield, which drew forth a long and warm reply.

How would he have been gratified had he lived to read the very superior publications in prose, "Cottage Dialogues," "Cottage Biography," &c., which she gave to the world after she had changed her name to Leadbeater! This excellent woman had not forgotten that early meeting with Mr. Crabbe; and in November, 1816, he had the unexpected pleasure of receiving from her the first of a long series of letters; his replies to which are rendered particularly interesting by the playful ingenuousness with which he describes himself. They are, in fact, most valuable additions to his auto-biographical sketch.

From Mrs. Leadbeater.

"Ballitore, 7th of 11th month, 1816.

"I believe it will surprise George Crabbe to receive a letter from an entire stranger, whom, most probably, he does not remember to have ever seen or heard of, but who cannot forget having met him at the house of Edmund Burke, Charles Street, James's Square, in the year 1784. I was brought thither by my father, Richard Shackleton, the friend, from their childhood, of Edmund Burke. My dear father told thee, that 'Goldsmith's would now be the *deserted village*.' Perhaps thou dost not remember this compliment; but I remember the ingenuous modesty which disclaimed it. He admired the 'Village,' the 'Library,' and the 'Newspaper' exceedingly; and the delight with which he read them to his family could not but be acceptable to the author, had he known the sound judgment and the exquisite taste which that excellent man possessed. But he saw no more of the productions of the Muse he admired, whose originality was not the least charm. He is dead—the friend whom he loved and honoured, and to whose character thou dost so much justice in the Preface to the 'Parish Register,' is also gone to the house appointed for all living. A splendid constellation of poets arose in the literary horizon. I looked around for Crabbe. 'Why does not he, who shines as brightly as any of these, add his lustre?' I had not long thought thus, when, in an Edinburgh Review, I met with reflections similar to my own, which introduced the 'Parish Register.' Oh! it was like the voice of a long-lost friend; and glad was I to hear that voice again in 'The Borough!'—still more in the 'Tales,' which appear to me excelling all that preceded them. Every work is so much in unison with our own feelings, that a wish for information concerning them and their author, received into our hearts, is strongly excited. One of our friends, Dykes Alexander, who was in Ballitore, in 1810 I think, said, he was personally acquainted with thee, and spoke highly of thy character. I regretted I had not an opportunity of conversing with him on this subject, as perhaps he would have been able to decide arguments which have arisen; namely, whether we owe to truth or to fiction that 'ever new delight' which thy poetry affords us? Thy characters, however singular some of them may be, are never unnatural; and thy sentiments, so true to domestic and social feelings, as well as to those of a higher nature, have the convincing power of reality over the mind; and *I* maintain that all thy pictures *are drawn from life*. To inquire whether this be the case, is the excuse which I make to myself for writing this letter. I wish the excuse may be accepted by thee; for I greatly fear I have taken an unwarrantable liberty in making the inquiry. Though advanced in life, yet, from an education of peculiar simplicity, and from never having been long absent from my retired native village, I am too little acquainted with decorum. If I have now transgressed the rules it prescribes, I appeal to the candour and liberality of thy mind to forgive a fault caused by strong enthusiasm.

"I am thy sincere friend, MARY LEADBEATER."

"P.S. Ballitore is the village in which Edmund Burke was educated by Abraham Shackleton, whose pupil he became in 1741, and from whose school he entered the college of Dublin in 1744. The school is still flourishing."

To Mrs. Leadbeater:

"Trowbridge, 1st of 12th month, 1816.

"MARY LEADBEATER!—Yes, indeed, I do well remember you! Not Leadbeater then, but a pretty demure lass, standing a timid auditor while her own verses were read by a kind friend, but a keen judge. And I have in my memory your father's person and countenance, and you may be sure that my vanity retained the compliment which he paid me in the moment when he permitted his judgment to slip behind his good humour and desire of giving pleasure:—Yes, I remember all who were present; and, of all, are not you and I the only survivors? It was the day—was it not?—when I introduced my wife to my friend. And now both are gone! and your father, and Richard Burke, who was present (yet again I must ask—was he not?)—and Mrs. Burke! All departed—and so, by and by, they will speak of us. But, in the mean time, it was good of you to write. Oh very—very good.

"But, are you not your father's own daughter? Do you not flatter after his manner? How do you know the mischief that you may do in the mind of a vain man, who is but too susceptible of praise, even while he is conscious of so much to be placed against it? I am glad that you like my verses: it would have mortified me much if you had not, for you can judge as well as write. . . . . Yours are really very admirable things; and the morality is as pure as the literary merit is conspicuous. I am not sure that I have read all that you have given us; but what I have read has really that rare and almost undefinable quality—genius: that is to say, it seizes on the mind, and commands attention; and on the heart, and compels its feelings.

"How could you imagine that I could be otherwise than pleased—delighted rather—with your letter? And let me not omit the fact, that I reply the instant I am at liberty, for I was enrobing myself for church. You are a child of simplicity, I know, and do not love robing; but you are a pupil of liberality, and look upon such things with a large mind, smiling in charity. Well! I was putting on the great black gown, when my servant—(you see I can be pompous, to write of gowns and servants with such familiarity)—when he brought me a letter first directed, the words yet legible, to 'George Crabbe, at Belvoir Castle,' and then by Lord Mendip

to 'the Reverend' at Trowbridge; and at Trowbridge I hope again to receive these welcome evidences of your remembrance, directed in all their simplicity, and written, I trust, in all sincerity. The delay was occasioned by a change in my place of residence. I now dwell in the parsonage of a busy, populous, clothing town sent thither by ambition, and the Duke of Rutland. It is situated in Wiltshire, not far from Bath.

"There was a Suffolk family of Alexanders, one of whom you probably mean; and as he knew very little of me, I see no reason why he should not give me a good character. Whether it was merited is another point, and that will depend upon our ideas of a good character. If it means, as it generally does, that I paid my debts, and was guilty of no glaring world-defying immorality—why yes! I was so far a good character. But before the Searcher of Hearts what are our good characters?

"But your motive for writing to me was your desire of knowing whether my men and women were really existing creatures, or beings of my own imagination? Nay, Mary Leadbeater, yours was a better motive: you thought that you should give pleasure by writing, and—yet you will think me very vain—you felt some pleasure yourself in renewing the acquaintance that commenced under such auspices! Am I not right? My heart tells me that I am, and hopes that you will confirm it. Be assured that I feel a very cordial esteem for the friend of my friend—the virtuous, the worthy character whom I am addressing. Yes, I will tell you readily about my creatures, whom I endeavoured to paint as nearly as I could and dared; for, in some cases, I dared not. This you will readily admit: besides, charity bade me be cautious. Thus far you are correct: there is not one of whom I had not in my mind the original; but I was obliged, in some cases, to take them from their real situations, in one or two instances to change even the sex, and, in many, the circumstances. The nearest to real life was the proud, ostentatious man in the 'Borough,' who disguises an ordinary mind by doing great things; but the others approach to reality at greater or less distances. Indeed, I do not know that I could paint merely from my own fancy; and there is no cause why we should. Is there not diversity sufficient in society? and who can go, even but a little, into the assemblies of our fellow-wanderers from the way of perfect rectitude, and not find characters so varied and so pointed, that he need not call upon his imagination?

"Will *you* not write again? 'Write *to* thee, or *for* the public?' wilt thou not ask? *To* me and *for* as many as love and can discern the union of strength and simplicity, purity and good sense. *Our* feeling and *our* hearts is the language you can adopt. Alas, *I* cannot with propriety use it—*our* I too could once say; but I am alone now, and since my removing into a busy town among the multitude, the loneliness is but more apparent and more melancholy. But this is only at certain times; and then I have, though at considerable distances, six female friends unknown to each other, but all dear, very dear, to me. With men I do not much associate, not as deserting, and much less disliking, the male part of society, but as being unfit for it; not hardy nor grave, not knowing enough, nor sufficiently acquainted with the every-day concerns of men. But my beloved creatures have minds with which I can better assimilate. Think of you I must; and of me, I must entreat that you would not be unmindful. Thine, dear lady, very truly,

"GEORGE CRABBE."

I dare say no one will put an unfavourable interpretation on my father's condescension to Mrs. Leadbeater's feelings, if, indeed, it was anything but a playful one, in dating the above letter after the Quaker fashion, "1st of 12th month." I need not transcribe the whole of this excellent lady's next letter: but the first and last paragraphs are as follow:—

"Ballitore, 29th of 12th month, 1816.

"RESPECTED FRIEND,—I cannot describe the sensations with which I began to read thy letter. They overpowered me. I burst into tears, and, even after I had recovered composure, found it necessary frequently to wipe my spectacles before I reached the conclusion. I felt astonishment mingled with delight, to find that I, in my lonely valley, was looked upon with such benevolence by him who sits upon the top of the hill. That benevolence encourages me again to take up the pen.—That day on which I had the pleasure of seeing thee and thy wife was the tenth day of the sixth month (June), 1784. It was the day thou introduced thy bride to thy friends. She sat on a sofa with Jane Burke; thou stood with Edmund near the window. May I ask how long it is since thou wast visited by the affliction of losing her, and how many children are left to comfort thee? But this is a delicate chord, and perhaps I should not touch it. The report of my having received a letter from thee, quickly spread through Ballitore, and I was congratulated by my family, friends, and neighbours, with unfeigned cordiality, on this distinction; for we partake in each other's joys and sorrows, being closely united in friendship and good neighbourhood. We are mostly a colony of Quakers; and those who are not of our profession, in their social intercourse with us conform to our sober habits. None of us are wealthy, all depending on industry for our humble competence, yet we find time to recreate ourselves with books, and generally see every publication which is proper for our perusal. Some profess not to relish poetry; yet *thou* hast contrived to charm us all, and sorry shall we be if thy next visit be to take leave. Therefore do not mar the pleasure we anticipate by a threat so alarming. In thy partiality for female society, I discern a resemblance to dear Cowper, our other moral poet, but enlivened by that flow of cheerfulness, which he so sadly wanted.

* * * * *

"I cannot define my motives for writing to thee. I perfectly recollect that one of them *was* the wish to be assured of the reality of thy characters. I suppose, also, I wished to know thy own; but I did not imagine I could give pleasure to thee by such an address; indeed, I feared offending, though that fear was dissipated when I opened one of thy volumes. How condescending art thou to gratify

my curiosity, and how glad am I to find myself right in my conjecture! But I felt confident that what impressed our hearts so deeply must be truth. I could say much more, but I curb myself, considering who I am, and whom I address; and am, with sentiments of gratitude and respect, sincerely thy friend, "MARY LEADBEATER."

I am approaching the period of my father's return to the high society of London; and, perhaps, a few remarks on his qualifications for mixing in such circles may, with propriety, precede some extracts from the Journal which he kept during his first season in the metropolis. When he re-entered such society, his position was very different from what it had been when he sat at the tables of Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the Duke of Rutland. *Then* he was under the avowed patronage of persons, whose station must have ensured him easy admittance among their equals, whatever might have been his own talents for society; but when he returned to high life, though his poetical reputation would, no doubt, have procured him an extensive introduction, nothing but his personal qualifications, agreeable or shining, could have enabled him to retain his place—nay, continually to enlarge the circle of his acquaintance, and see the cordiality of his distinguished admirers growing into the warmth and attachment of friendship.

Now, certainly, all this was not to be attributed to any very shining qualities in his conversation. He had no talent for speaking—never, except at one or two public meetings, uttered a sentence in the form or tone of a speech in his life, but said (as was admirably remarked by Mr. Murray) "uncommon things in so natural and easy a way, that he often lost the credit of them." Nor were such conversational powers as he did possess always at his command—they required to be drawn forth and fostered. Perhaps, no man with an appearance so prepossessing was ever more distrustful of his powers to please. Coldness and reserve would benumb them; and he would be abstracted and even distressed. But where he was once received warmly, he generally felt that strong partiality which ever unlocked his heart and drew forth his powers; and under particular circumstances, when his spirits were raised, he could be the most delightful of companions.

Argument he sustained with great impatience: he neither kept close to his point, nor preserved his temper. This dislike of controversial discourse arose, in part, probably, from a consciousness that he had not cultivated the faculty of close logical reasoning; but partly, also, from an opinion, or rather feeling, that he had, against all pretence of colloquial equality. He had seen the submission paid to the opinions of Johnson and Burke, and he always readily followed the lead of any one whom he thought skilled on the topic in question; but when he ventured an assertion himself, he expected similar deference. And, to be candid, though what he said was pretty sure to be just, yet there was an unfair and aristocratic principle in this expectation, which I never could think quite in harmony with the general modesty of his nature.

But he had a recommendation for the best society infinitely more availing than even the brilliancy of wit. In appearance, manners, and disposition, he was entirely the gentleman. Mr. Burke had discovered this stamp when he had recently left the warehouse at Slaughden, and since that time his walk had been at Belvoir, Glemham, and Cambridge; and his profession, his studies, his age, and his literary success had fully ripened the character. Perhaps it may be said, that no one so humbly born and bred, ever retained so few traces of his origin. His person and his countenance peculiarly led the mind from the suspicion of any, but a highly cultivated and polished education; venerable, clerical, intellectual,—it seemed a strange inconsistency to imagine him, even in early youth, occupied as a warehouseman; and, in fact, there was no company in which his appearance would not have proclaimed him an equal. But, above all, he had the disposition of a gentleman, the genuine politeness of a virtuous mind, and a warm and benevolent heart, ready to enter into the interests of others, grateful for their attentions, and happy in their happiness.

The vicinity of Trowbridge to Bath, Bowood, &c. drew Mr. Crabbe by degrees into the distinguished society of London. He was first introduced to the noble family of Lansdowne by his brother poet, and, in latter days, attached friend, the Reverend W. L. Bowles; and it was, I believe, under that roof that he began an acquaintance, which also soon ripened into a strong friendship, with the author of the "Pleasures of Memory." Mr. Rogers urged him to pay a visit in the summer season to the metropolis: he did so, and, taking lodgings near his new friend's residence in St. James's Place, was welcomed in the most cordial manner by the whole of that wide circle,—including almost every name distinguished in politics, fashion, science, literature, and art,—of which Mr. Rogers has so long been considered as the brightest ornament. His reception at Holland House was peculiarly warm, in consequence of his early acquaintance with the late Mr. Fox; but, indeed, every mansion of that class was now open to receive him with pride and pleasure: nor were the attentions of royalty withheld. In this brilliant society, to which after this time he returned during some weeks for several successive seasons, he became personally acquainted with Mr. Moore, who soon afterwards came to reside at no great distance from Trowbridge, and maintained an affectionate inter-

course with him to the last. He was also introduced, on one of these London visits, by Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street, to his correspondent Sir Walter Scott; and the admiration and respect they had long felt for each other were but heightened and confirmed by mutual observation. I am happy to say, that among my father's papers have been found several note-books, containing short memoranda of these exciting scenes, and from them I shall extract various specimens. They will, however artless, convey, perhaps, no inadequate impression of the brilliant reception he met with. A friend who saw much of him under these new circumstances, says, "It is not easy to conjecture the effect which the modern world produced on one who had associated with Burke, Reynolds, and Johnson. As for himself, there can be no doubt that he produced a very pleasing impression on those who now, for the first time, beheld and heard him. There was much of the old school in his manners, and even in the disposition of his beautiful white hair; but this sat gracefully on his time of life and professional character, and an apparent simplicity, arising from his strangeness to some of the recent modes of high life, was mingled with so much shrewdness of remark, that most people found his conversation irresistibly amusing. When in society which he particularly liked, he would manifest some of the peculiar traits which distinguish his writings, in keen pointed sarcastic humour, and pithy observations: and to this he joined, in the company of ladies, such a spice of the old-fashioned gallantry and politeness, as never fails to please when it is unaffected and genuine."

I proceed to make some extracts from his London Journal of 1817. He reached town in company with his friend, Mr. W. Waldron, on the 19th of June:—

"*June 24th.*—Mr. Rogers; his brother, and family. Mr. and Mrs. Moore, very agreeable and pleasant people. Foscolo, the Italian gentleman. Dante, &c. Play, Kemble in Coriolanus.

"*26th.*—Mr. Rogers and the usual company at breakfast. Lady Holland comes and takes me to Holland House. The old building. Addison's room. Bacon. Mr. Fox. The busts and statues. Gardens very pleasant and walks extensive. Meet at Holland House Mr. Allen. He appears equally intelligent and affable. Must have a difficult part, and executes it well. A young Grecian under Lady Holland's protection. Meet Mr. Campbell. Mr. Moore with us. Mr. Rogers joins us in the course of the day. Met Mr. Douglas,[2] in my way, at the Horse Guards, and promised to dine with him on Saturday. He says I cannot leave Holland House; that it is *experimentum crucis*. Dinner. Mr. Brougham, who in some degree reminds me of Mr. Burke. Ready at all subjects, and willing; very friendly. Duchess of Bedford, daughter of the Duchess of Gordon. The confidence of high fashion. In the evening, Countess Besborough, a frank and affectionate character, mother of Lady Caroline Lamb, invites me to her house the next evening.—Miss Fox.[3] I remember meeting her thirty years since; but did not tell her so, and yet could not help appearing to know her; and she questions me much on the subject. Parry it pretty well.—Mrs. Fox.[4] All the remains of a fine person; affectionate manners and informed mind. Diffident and retiring. Appeared to be much affected at meeting a friend of her husband. Invites me to her house; and I am told she was much in earnest. Retire very late.

"*27th.*—Breakfast with Mr. Brougham and Lady Holland. Lord Holland to speak at Kemble's retiring, at the meeting at Freemasons' Tavern to-morrow. Difficulty of procuring me an admission ticket, as all are distributed. Trial made by somebody, I knew not who, failed. This represented to Lady Holland, who makes no reply. Morning interview with Mr. Brougham. Mr. Campbell's *letter*.[5] He invites us to Sydenham. I refer it to Mr. Rogers and Mr. Moore. Return to town. The porter delivers to me a paper containing the admission ticket, procured by Lady Holland's means: whether request or command I know not. Call on Mr. Rogers. We go to the Freemasons' Tavern. The room filled. We find a place about half-way down the common seats, but not where the managers dine, above the steps. By us Mr. Smith, one of the authors of the Rejected Addresses. Known, but no introduction. Mr. Perry, editor of the Morning Chronicle, and Mr. Campbell, find us, and we are invited into the Committee-room. Kemble, Perry, Lord Erskine, Mr. Moore, Lord Holland, Lord

[2] The late Hon. Sylvester Douglas.

[3] Sister to the late Mr. Fox.

[4] Widow of the Right Hon. Charles James Fox.

[5] I take the liberty of inserting Mr. Campbell's letter;—a letter full of what only a high mind in such eminent station would express. My father had found Mr. Campbell a much younger man than he had expected.

"Sydenham, June 25, 1817.

"My Dear Sir,—I sent an apology to Lady Holland for not being able to dine at Holland House to-day; and at that very moment of writing, I felt that I owed also an apology to you for not testifying, by my acceptance of the invitation, the high value which I attached to an opportunity of meeting you. It was, indeed, an indispensable engagement that kept me, otherwise it would have been an humiliating self-reflection to have neglected such an occasion of being in the company of Crabbe. You thought me an old man; but, in addressing you, my dear Sir, I feel myself younger than even the difference of our years might seem to justify. I have a very youthful feeling of respect,—nay, if you will pardon me for the liberty of saying so,—something of a filial upward-looking affection for your matured genius and patriarchal reputation. This reverence for your classic name would have been equally strong in my mind if I had not been so fortunate as to form an acquaintance with you; which your kind manners have made a proud era in the little history of my life. That time, and that spot, in the library of Holland House, I shall never forget, when you shook me a second time by the hand. It must be one of the most enviable privileges of your senior and superior merit to confer pleasure on such men as myself, by recognising them as younger brothers of your vocation. One token of your kindness was a promise to give me a day of your society. I would not be importunate on this head; but I cannot help reminding you of it, and assuring you that Mrs. Campbell has a very proper sympathy with me in the enthusiasm which I feel to have the honour of your presence under my roof. Our excellent friend, Mr. Rogers, I trust, will accompany you, and you will have the goodness to fix the day. Believe me, most estimable Sir, yours truly, "T. Campbell."

Ossory, whom I saw at Holland House. Dinner announced. Music. Lord Erskine sits between me and a young man, whom I found to be a son of Boswell. Lord Holland's speech after dinner. The Ode recited.[6] Campbell's speech. Kemble's—Talma's. We leave the company, and go to Vauxhall to meet Miss Rogers and her party. Stay late.

"*28th.*—Go to St. James's Place. Lord Byron's new works, Manfred, and Tasso's Lament. The tragedy very fine—but very obscure in places. The Lament more perspicuous, and more feeble. Seek lodgings, 37, Bury Street. Females only visible. Dine as agreed with Mr. Douglas. Chiefly strangers. My new lodgings a little mysterious.

"*29th.*—Breakfast at the Coffee-house in Pall Mall, and go to Mr. Rogers and family. Agree to dine, and then join their party after dinner. Mr. Stothard. Foscolo. Drive to Kensington Gardens in their carriage. Grosvenor Gate. Effect new and striking. Kensington Gardens have a very peculiar effect; not exhilarating, I think, yet alive and pleasant. Return to my new lodgings. Inquire for the master. There is one, I understand, in the country. Am at a loss whether my damsel is extremely simple, or too knowing.

"*30th.*—Letter from Mrs. Norris.[7] Like herself. First hour at Mr. Murray's. A much younger and more lively man than I had imagined.—A handsome drawing-room, where he receives his friends, usually from two to five o'clock. Pictures by Phillips, of Lord Byron, Mr. Scott, Mr. Southey, Mr. Campbell, Rogers (yet unfinished), Moore, by Lawrence" (his last picture). "Mr. Murray wishes me to sit. Advise with Mr. Rogers. He recommends.[8] Dine with Lord Ossory. Meet Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne.[9] Engage to dine on Friday. Lord Gower.[10]

"*July* 1*st.*—I foresee a long train of engagements. Dine with Mr. Rogers. Company: Kemble, Lord Erskine, Lord Ossory, Sir George Beaumont, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Moore. Miss R. retires early, and is not seen any more at home. Meet her, at the Gallery in Pall Mall, with Mr. Westall.

"2*d.*—Duke of Rutland. List of pictures burned at Belvoir Castle. Dine at Sydenham, with Mr. and Mrs. Campbell. Mr. Moore, and Mr. Rogers. Poets' Club."

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I here interrupt my father's Journal, in order to give part of a letter with which I have lately been honoured by Mr. Campbell.

"The first time I met Crabbe was at Holland House, where he and Tom Moore and myself lounged the better part of a morning about the park and library; and I can answer for one of the party at least being very much pleased with it. Our conversation, I remember, was about novelists. Your father was a strong Fieldingite, and I as sturdy a Smollettite. His mildness in literary argument struck me with surprise in so stern a poet of nature, and I could not but contrast the unassumingness of his manners with the originality of his powers. In what may be called the ready-money small-talk of conversation, his facility might not perhaps seem equal to the known calibre of his talents; but in the progress of conversation I recollect remarking that there was a vigilant shrewdness that almost eluded you by keeping its watch so quietly. Though an oldish man when I saw him, he was not a '*laudator temporis acti*,' but a decided lover of later times.

"The part of the morning which I spent at Holland House with him and Tom Moore, was one, to me at least, of memorable agreeableness. He was very frank, and even confidential, in speaking of his own feelings. Though in a serene tone of spirits, he confessed to me that since the death of his wife he had scarcely known positive happiness. I told him that in that respect, viz. the calculation of our own happiness, we are apt to deceive ourselves. The man whose manners are mild and tranquil, and whose conversation is amusing, cannot be positively unhappy.

"When Moore left us we were joined by Foscolo; and I remember as distinctly as if it had been yesterday, the contrasted light in which Crabbe and Foscolo struck me. It is not an invidious contrast—at least my feelings towards Ugo's memory intend it not to be so,—yet it was to me morally instructive, and, I need hardly say, greatly in favour of your father. They were both men of genius, and both simple. But what a different sort of simplicity! I felt myself between them as if I had been standing between a roaring cataract and a placid stream. Ugo raged and foamed in argument, to my amusement, but not at all to your father's liking. He could not abide him. What we talked about I do not recollect; but only that Ugo's impetuosity was a foil to the amenity of the elder bard.

"One day—and how can it fail to be memorable to me when Moore has commemorated it?—your father, and Rogers, and Moore, came down to Sydenham pretty early in the forenoon, and stopped to dine with me. We talked of founding a Poets' Club, and even set about electing the members, not by ballot, but *vivâ voce*. The scheme failed, I scarcely know how; but this I know, that a week or so afterwards, I met with Perry, of the Morning Chronicle, who asked me how our Poets' Club was going on. I said, 'I don't know—we have some difficulty of giving it a name,—we thought of calling ourselves *the Bees*.' 'Ah,' said Perry, 'that's a little different from the common report, for they say you are to be called *the Wasps*.' I was so stung with this waspish report, that I thought no more of the Poets' Club.

"The last time I saw Crabbe was, when I dined with him at Mr. Hoare's at Hampstead. He very kindly came with me to the coach to see me off, and I never pass that spot on the top of Hampstead Heath without thinking of him. As to the force and faith of his genius, it would be superfluous in me to offer any opinion. Pray, pardon me for

[6] This beautiful Ode is now included in Mr. Campbell's collective works.

[7] Mr. Crabbe was on terms of intimate friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Norris, of Hughenden Hall, near Wycombe, Bucks.

[8] Mr. Crabbe did sit to Mr. Phillips. (See Frontispiece.)

[9] I take the liberty of inserting the following passage from a letter with which I have recently been honoured by the noble marquess:—"Any testimony to your father's amiable and unaffected manners, and to that simplicity of character which he united to the uncommon powers of minute observation, would indeed be uncalled for; as it could only express the common feeling of all who had access to his society."

[10] Now Duke of Sutherland.

speaking of his memory in this very imperfect manner, and believe me, dear sir, yours very truly,

"T. CAMPBELL."

* * * * *

I return to Mr. Crabbe's Journal:—

"*July 3d.*—Letter from Trowbridge. I pity you, my dear John, but I must plague you. Robert Bloomfield. He had better rested as a shoemaker, or even a farmer's boy; for he would have been a farmer perhaps in time, and now he is an unfortunate poet. By the way, indiscretion did much. It might be virtuous and affectionate in him to help his thoughtless relations; but his more liberal friends do not love to have their favours so disposed of. He is, however, to be pitied and assisted. Note from Mr. Murray respecting the picture. Go, with Mr. Rogers, in his carriage, to Wimbledon. Earl and Countess Spencer. The grounds more beautiful than any I have yet seen; more extensive, various, rich. The profusion of roses extraordinary. Dinner. Mr. Heber, to whom Mr. Scott addresses one canto of Marmion. Mr. Stanhope. A pleasant day. Sleep at Wimbledon.

"*4th.*—Morning view, and walk with Mr. Heber and Mr. Stanhope. Afterwards Mr. Rogers, Lady S., Lady H. A good picture, if I dare draw it accurately: to place in lower life, would lose the peculiarities which depend upon their station; yet, in any station. Return with Mr. Rogers. Dine at Lansdowne House. Sir James Mackintosh, Mr. Grenville, elder brother to Lord Grenville. My visit to Lord Lansdowne's father in this house, thirty-seven years since! Porter's lodge. Mr. Wynn. Lord Ossory.

"*5th.*—My thirty lines done; but not well I fear; thirty daily is the self-engagement. Dine at George's Coffee-house. Return. Stay late at Holborn. The kind of shops open at so late an hour. Purchase in one of them. Do not think they deceive any person in particular.

"*6th.*—Call at Mr. Rogers's and go to Lady Spencer. Go with Mr. Rogers to dine at Highbury with his brother and family. Miss Rogers the same at Highbury as in town. Visit to Mr. John Nichols. He relates the story of our meeting at Muston, and inquires for John, &c. His daughters agreeable women. Mr. Urban wealthy. Arrive at home in early time. Go to Pall Mall Coffee-house and dine. Feel hurt about Hampstead. Mr. Rogers says I must dine with him to-morrow, and that I consented when at Sydenham; and now certainly they expect me at Hampstead, though I have made no promise.

"*7th.*—Abide by the promise, and take all possible care to send my letter; so that Mr. Hoare[11] may receive it before dinner. Set out for Holborn Bridge to obtain assistance. In the way find the Hampstead stage, and obtain a promise of delivery in time. Prepare to meet our friends at Mr. Rogers's. Agree to go to Mr. Phillips, and sit two hours and a half. Mrs. Phillips a very agreeable and beautiful woman. Promise to breakfast next morning. Go to Holborn. Letter from Mr. Frere. Invited to meet Mr. Canning, &c. Letter from Mr. Wilbraham. Dinner at Mr. Rogers's with Mr. Moore and Mr. Campbell, Lord Strangford, and Mr. Spencer. Leave them, and go by engagement to see Miss O'Neil, in Lady Spencer's box. Meet there Lady Besborough, with whom I became acquainted at Holland House, and her married daughter. Lady B. the same frank character; Mr. Grenville the same gentle and polite one: Miss O'Neil natural, and I think excellent; and even her 'Catherine,' especially in the act of yielding the superiority to the husband, well done and touching. Lady Besborough obligingly offers to set me down at twelve o'clock. Agreed to visit the Hon. W. Spencer[12] at his house at Petersham, and there to dine next day with Mr. Wilbraham.

"*8th.*—Mr. Phillips. Sit again. Begin to think something may be made. Mrs. Phillips. Find a stray child. Mrs. Phillips takes him home. Mr. Murray's. Mr. Frere. To dine on Monday next. Dine this day with Mr. North. Meet Lord Dundas. Mrs. Wedall. Story of the poor weaver, who begged his master to allow him a loom, for the work of which he would charge nothing: an instance of distress. Thirty lines to-day; but not yesterday: must work up.—I even still doubt whether it be pure simplicity, a little romantic, or—a great deal simplified. Yet I may, and it is likely to, mistake.

"*9th.*—Agree to dine with Mr. Phillips. A day of indisposition unlike the former. Dine at George's Coffee-house, and in a stupid humour. Go to a play not very enlivening; yet the 'Magpie and Maid' was, in some parts, affecting, till you reflected.

"*10th.*—Apology for last night. Maiden at a ball; I hope not mistress too. Rise early for the coach to Twickenham, as I prefer going first to Mr. Wilbraham, who first invited me. Ask what is the name of every place except one, and that one is Twickenham, and so go a mile at least beyond. Walk back to Twickenham. Meet a man carrying a child. He passed me, but with hesitation; and there was, as I believed, both distress and honesty. As he watched my manner, he stopped, and I was unwilling to disappoint him. The most accomplished actor could not counterfeit the joy and surprise at first, and then the joy without the surprise afterwards. The man was simple, and had no roguish shrewdness. Pope's house.[13] Civil man, and something more. Mr. Wilbraham. A drive round the country three hours. Richmond Hill. Recollect Sir Joshua's house. Hampton Court. Petersham. In Mr. Wilbraham's carriage to Brentford. Take a chaise to Knightsbridge. Make up my thirty lines for yesterday and to-day. Take a story from the Dutch imposition, but with great variation.

"*11th.*—Breakfast with Mr. Rogers: talk of Mr. Frere. Mr. Douglas. Called for by Mr. Spencer. This gentleman is grandson to the Duke of Marlborough. He married, at nineteen, a very beautiful and most accomplished woman, in the court of the Duke of Weimar. She was sixteen. His manner is fascinating, and his temper all complacency and kindness. His poetry far beyond that implied in the character of *Vers de Société*. I am informed Mrs. S. has very extraordinary talents. Go in the

[11] The late Samuel Hoare, Esq., of Hampstead.

[12] Mr. Spencer, the well-known translator of "Leonora," &c. &c. &c.

[13] Pope's villa, now inhabited by Sir Wathen Waller, Bart., and his lady, the Baroness Howe.

carriage with his daughter to Petersham by Ham House. Introduced to Mrs. Spencer, Sir Harry Englefield, and Mr. Standish, a Bond-street man, but of a superior kind; and so is Sir Harry. A very delightful morning. Gardens. Miss Spencer drives me to Richmond in her pony-chaise. The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland and Madame W—— came in the evening. The duchess very engaging. Daughter of the Duke of Weimar, and sister to the Queen of Prussia. Mr. Spencer with them at the court. All this period pleasant, easy, gay, with a tincture of melancholy that makes it delicious. A drawback on mirth, but not on happiness, when our affection has a mixture of regret and pity.

"14*th*.—Some more intimate conversation this morning with Mr. and Mrs. Moore. They mean to go to Trowbridge. He is going to Paris, but will not stay long. Mrs. Spencer's album. Agree to dine at Curzon Street. A welcome letter from ——. This makes the day more cheerful. Suppose it were so. Well! 't is not! Go to Mr. Rogers, and take a farewell visit to Highbury. Miss Rogers. Promise to go when ——. Return early. Dine there, and purpose to see Mr. Moore and Mr. Rogers in the morning when they set out for Calais.

"15*th*.—Was too late this morning. Messrs. Rogers and Moore were gone. Go to church at St. James's. The sermon good; but the preacher thought proper to apologise for a severity which he had not used. Write some lines in the solitude of Somerset House, not fifty yards from the Thames on one side, and the Strand on the other; but as quiet as the sands of Arabia. I am not quite in good humour with this day; but, happily, I cannot say why.

"16*th*.—Mr. Boswell the younger. Malone's papers. He is an advocate, like most of his countrymen, for Mary. Mr. Frere's poem.[14] Meet, at Mr. Murray's, Mr. Heber. Mr. Douglas takes me to Mr. Frere at Brompton. Meet Mr. Canning and Lord Binning. Conversation on church affairs. A little on the poem of the Stowmarket men. Go home with Mr. Douglas, and call for the ladies at St. James's Place. Write about eighty verses. Agree to stay over Sunday.

"16*th*.—Picture finished, which allows me more time. Lady Errol[15] and Lady Holland. Invitation from Lord Binning.[16] Write, in consequence of my second delay, to Mrs. Norris and Anna. Resolve not to stay beyond Tuesday. Farewell dinner with Mr. Canning. Dine to-day with my friends in Curzon Street. Pleasant, as all is there. Mrs. Spencer the same agreeable young woman. Besides the family, Sir Harry Englefield, a Catholic. His character opens upon me very much. He appeared to be in earnest, and I hope he was. It would be hard if we were judged by our youthful sins,' or even if sins necessarily implied unbelief. Meet in my way Lady Besborough, with a gentleman and a young lady. She does not introduce me, and I pass on; but, describing the lady, I understand it was Lady Caroline Lamb. Lady Besborough comes at night to Mr. Spencer's, and confirms it. She invites me to Roehampton. Pleasant evening.

"17*th*.—Omitted a visit to the Duchess of Rutland at an earlier time. She invites me to dine; but our days did not accord. Notes from Mr. Frere and Mr. Canning. Dine with Mr. Douglas. Mr. Boswell the younger: I met the elder in the morning. Many gentlemen with us. Mr. Douglas sends us home in his carriage. Good day, at least as far as relates to Mr. Douglas, who is ever the same. I wrote to Trowbridge. They are not correct in their opinion: yet I love London; and who does not, if not confined to it? A visit from Sir Harry Englefield. There is an affectionate manner, which almost hides his talents; and they are not trifling. Wrote my lines to-day, but no more.

"18*th*.—Read the pamphlet Mr. Boswell recommended: natural, certainly, and the man had too much provocation for his act. There is the wish of the heart to acquit itself, but that is very common. Dine with Mr. Murray. Very fine day. Sir Harry in good spirits, except during his vehemence. Mr. Phillips. Mr. Chantry. His 'Mother and Infants' in the exhibition. Mr. and Mrs. Graham. The Mrs. Graham[17] who wrote the lively India Journal, a delightful woman! Mr. Phillips argued, and preserved his temper. Sir Harry was silent, for fear of being tumultuous. The dinner in every respect as in a nobleman's house. Join the ladies. Mrs. Graham still lively. Sir Harry's account of the Isle of Wight; a folio, with prints. At eleven o'clock enters Lady Caroline Lamb. She offers to take me on a visit to her company at twelve o'clock. I hesitated, for I had curiosity; but finally declined. Mr. Wilkie. His picture in the exhibition much admired.

"19*th*.—Agreed to sit half an hour, for Mr. Phillips to retouch the picture. Breakfast with them once more.—Leave them, and return to Bury Street, and find a note!! What an unaccountable! It is so ridiculous!—Foscolo; who said he would call, and I must go with him to his friends, Lady Flint, and sister, and nieces. He came, and I assented. I was paid for compliance. They are very delightful women. Go and call on Mrs. Spencer; find Sir Harry Englefield. These are two favourite characters. Dine at Lord Binning's. Lady Binning with one visitor. She knows me, and we are at ease. Mr. Canning more lively as with his friends, and very pleasant. Mr. Frere could not dine. Lady Errol indisposed. Mr. Robinson.[18] Conceive J. B.'s size and good temper, with a look of more understanding, and better manner. Mr. Huskisson—countenance less open; grew more free, and became pleasant. The Speaker[19] polite, and rather cheerful; a peculiar cast of the countenance; pleasing, certainly. Mrs. Canning I thought reserved; but all appearance of this retired. I was too much a stranger among friends; but, before we parted, all became easy. Lord Binning a sensible, polite man.

"20*th*.—I wake ill this morning and nervous; and so little do we judge of the future, that I was half inclined to make apologies, and not join the plea-

[14] "The Monks and the Giants," published under the name of Whistlecraft, of Stowmarket, Suffolk.

[15] The Countess Dowager of Errol, wife of the Right Honourable John Hookham Frere.

[16] Now Earl of Haddington.

[17] Maria Graham, now Mrs. Calcott.

[18] The Right Honourable Frederick Robinson, now Earl of Ripon.

[19] The Right Honourable Charles Manners Sutton.

santest of all parties. I must go from this infatuating scene.—Walk in the Park, and in some degree recover. Write two hours. At seven go to Sir Harry Englefield. A large house that overlooks the Park and Serpentine River. Disappointed of Mr. Spencer; but Mrs. Spencer, and Miss Churchill, and Miss Spencer dine with us. Mr. Murray and Mr. Standish. Nothing particularly worthy of remark at dinner; but after dinner, one of the best conversations since I came to town. Mr. Spencer and Miss Churchill chiefly; on the effect of high polish on minds; chiefly female; Sir Harry sometimes joining, and Miss Spencer. A very delightful evening. Sir Harry's present of Ariosto's inkstand. Of a double value, as a gift, and from the giver. Mr. Standish and Mr. Murray leave us. Part painfully at one o'clock. Yes, there are at Trowbridge two or three; and it is well there are. Promise (if I live) to return in the winter. Miss Churchill a very superior and interesting woman. Take leave of my friend Sir Harry. The impression rather nervous, and they will smile at ——, I am afraid; but I shall still feel. I shall think of this evening.

"21*st*.—I would not appear to myself superstitious. I returned late last night, and my reflections were as cheerful as such company could make them, and not, I am afraid, of the most humiliating kind; yet, for the first time these many nights, I was incommoded by dreams such as would cure vanity for a time in any mind where they could gain admission. Some of Baxter's mortifying spirits whispered very singular combinations. None, indeed, that actually did happen in the very worst of times, but still with a formidable resemblance. It is, doubtless, very proper to have the mind thus brought to a sense of its real and possible alliances, and the evils it has encountered, or might have had; but why these images should be given at a time when the thoughts, the waking thoughts, were of so opposite a nature, I cannot account. So it was. Awake, I had been with the high, the apparently happy: we were very pleasantly engaged, and my last thoughts were cheerful. Asleep, all was misery and degradation, not my own only, but of those who had been.—That horrible image of servility and baseness — that mercenary and commercial manner! It is the work of imagination, I suppose; but it is very strange. I must leave it.[20]—Walk to Holborn. Call and pay for yesterday's coffee, which, with a twenty-pound note and some gold, I could not discharge then. A letter from Mrs. Norris; like herself and all hers. Now for business. Called at Holborn, and stayed an hour with P—, York Coffee-house. Return and write. Go to Oxford Street to take a place for Wycombe, a mile and a half from Mr. Norris. After a short delay, I pay my visit to Mrs. Spencer. Her husband's note left with me. Find her and the young people. Return by Mr. Murray's, and send to Lady Errol's from his house. He obligingly sent his servant to Bury Street. Lady Errol much better. May hope to meet Mr. Frere this day at dinner. Prepare to go with Mr. Douglas to Mr. Canning's.—Mr. Canning's dinner. Gardens and house in very beautiful style: doubly secluded, and yet very near town.[21] Mr. Huskisson, two younger gentlemen, Mr. Frere, Mr. Canning, Mr. Douglas, and myself. Claret more particularly excellent. Ministerial claret. A lively day. Shakspeare. Eton and Westminster. Mr. Canning.—This is the last evening in town, notwithstanding the very kind invitation of Mr. Douglas. And here I may close my journal, of certainly the most active, and, with very little exception,—that is, the exception of one or two persons, — the most agreeable of all excursions — except ——."

"22*d*.—Oxford Street politician, who assures me nothing can be more true, than that ministers send spies to Ireland with money to intoxicate the poor people; who are persuaded to enter into treason while drunk, are taken next morning to a magistrate, condemned on the evidence of the seducer, and executed before noon; and this man seemed ready to testify on oath, as a major somebody had testified to him.—Three o'clock for Wycombe. Arrive at eight, and walk to the great house, as my guide was proud to call it. Mrs. Norris: she looks as one recovering, but not quite well. Her spirits as usual.

"23*d*.—A vile engagement to an oratorio at church, by I know not how many noisy people; women as well as men. Luckily, I sat where I could write unobserved, and wrote forty lines, only interrupted by a song of Mrs. Brand—a hymn, I believe. It was less doleful than the rest. Party at dinner. Music after dinner, much more cheerful and enlivening than at church. Solitary evening walk. Things soon become familiarised, when the persons are well known. Thought of Sunday next, and wrote about half a sermon upon confirmation.

"24*th*.—Read Miss Edgeworth's dramas. Company at breakfast. Finish my sermon.—Must determine to go to-morrow. Younger dear's birthday."

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The following is an extract from a letter of the 25th:—

"This visit to London has, indeed, been a rich one. I had new things to see, and was, perhaps, something of a novelty myself. Mr. Rogers introduced me to almost every man he is acquainted with; and in this number were comprehended all I was previously very desirous to obtain a knowledge of."

Shortly after his return to Trowbridge from this excursion of 1817, my father wrote as follows to his friend at Ballitore:—

"A description of your village society would be very gratifying to me—how the manners differ from those in larger societies, or in those under different circumstances. I have observed an extraordinary difference in village manners in England, especially between those places otherwise nearly alike, when there was and when there was not a

[20] Mr. Moore, on reading this journal in MS., writes thus:—"The Journal of your father is a most interesting document; and it is rather curious that some parts of it should so much resemble the journalising style of Byron, particularly that describing his frightful dream after a day of enjoyment." A very striking poem, entitled "Dreams," &c., will be given in the posthumous volume.

[21] Mr. Canning, at this time, resided at Gloucester Lodge, near Brompton.

leading man, or a squire's family, or a manufactory near, or a populous, vitiated town, &c. All these, and many other circumstances, have great influence. *Your* quiet village, with such influencing minds, I am disposed to think highly of. No one, perhaps, very rich — none miserably poor. No girls, from six years to sixteen, sent to a factory, where men, women, and children of all ages are continually with them breathing contagion. Not all, however: we are not so evil—there is a resisting power, and it is strong; but the thing itself, the congregation of so many minds, and the intercourse it occasions, will have its powerful and visible effect. But these you have not; yet as you mention your schools of both kinds, you must be more populous and perhaps not so happy as I was giving myself to believe.

"I will write my name and look for two lines; but complying with you, my dear lady, is a kind of vanity.[22] I find, however, no particular elevation of spirit, and will do as you desire; indeed, your desire must be very unlike yours, if I were not glad to comply with it; for the world has not spoiled you, Mary, I do believe: now it has me. I have been absorbed in its mighty vortex, and gone into the midst of its greatness, and joined in its festivities and frivolities, and been intimate with its children. You may like me very well, my kind friend, while the purifying water, and your more effectual imagination, is between us; but come you to England, or let me be in Ireland, and place us where mind becomes acquainted with mind,—and then! ah, Mary Leadbeater! you would have done with your friendship with me! Child of simplicity and virtue, how can you let yourself be so deceived? Am I not a great fat Rector, living upon a mighty income, while my poor curate starves with six hungry children, upon the scraps that fall from the luxurious table? Do I not visit that horrible London, and enter into its abominable dissipations? Am I not this day going to dine on venison and drink claret?[23] Have I not been at election dinners, and joined the Babel-confusion of a town-hall? Child of simplicity! am I fit to be a friend to you, and to the peaceful, mild, pure, gentle people about you? One thing only is true,—I wish I had the qualification; but I am of the world, Mary. Though I hope to procure a free cover for you, yet I dare not be sure, and so must husband my room. I am sorry for your account of the fever among your poor. Would I could suggest anything! I shall dine with one of our representatives to-day; but such subjects pass off: all say, 'Poor people, I am sorry,' and there it ends. My new Tales are not yet entirely ready, but do not want much that I can give them. I return all your good wishes, think of you, and with much regard, more than, indeed, belongs to *a man of the world!* Still, let me be permitted to address thee.—O! my dear Mrs. L., this is so humble that I am afraid it is vain. Well! write soon, then, and believe me to be most sincerely, and affectionately yours, GEORGE CRABBE."

I have introduced the above extract in this place, on account of the allusions it contains to my father's reception in the gay world of London,—a reception of the nature of which his own family, until his journals came to light after his death, had never had an exact notion. When he returned home after one of these intoxicating visits to the metropolis, no one could trace the slightest difference in his manners or habits. He rarely spoke, even to his sons, of the brilliant circles in which he had been figuring; and when some casual circumstance led to the passing mention of some splendid connection, there was such unaffected simplicity in the little vanity of his air, if I may so call it, that it only served to show that he did appreciate justly, what his natural good sense would not permit him to value above its real worth, or to dwell on so as to interfere with the usual duties and pursuits of his own station and long-formed tastes. He resumed next morning, just as if nothing had happened, his visits among his parishioners, his care of parish business, his books and papers, and last, not least, his long rambles among the quarries near Trowbridge: for never, after my mother's death, did he return seriously to botany, the favourite study of his earlier life. Fossils were thenceforth to him what weeds and flowers had been: he would spend hours on

[22] Mrs. Leadbeater had requested Mr. Crabbe to give an autograph for Mr. Wilkinson, the Quaker poet, the same worthy man to whom Wordsworth refers in the verses,

"Spade with which Wilkinson hath till'd his lands," &c.

and he sent the following scrap:—

"Enclosed, at Mrs. Leadbeater's request, for Thomas Wilkinson's collection of handwritings:—

"One calm, cold evening, when the moon was high,
And rode sublime within the cloudy sky,
She sat within her hut, nor seemed to feel
Or cold, or want, but turn'd her idle wheel;
And with sad song its melancholy tone
Mix'd—all unconscious that she dwelt alone."

"The above six lines are from a discarded poem: they are good for little, and the epithet 'idle' may not seem proper for a spinning-wheel: but my poor heroine was discarded, and, therefore, it was idle, because profitless."

[23] Mrs. Leadbeater says, in her answer to this letter:—"Have I given too partial an account of our little community? Ask those who visit Ballitore; who quit it with regret, and return to it with delight; some of whom call it the Classic Vale, some the Vale of Tempe, some the Happy Valley, some Simplicity's Vale; while others take a higher flight, and dignify it by the name of Athens: all agreeing, that we live like one large family. Thus, from infancy to age preserved in this safe enclosure, surrounded by excellent examples, have I not much to be accountable for? And yet how little am I cleansed from secret faults, I shall not say, for I fear one of these is a desire to appear better than I am to him whose good opinion I do indeed highly value, and who, I believe, is disposed to be more severe upon himself than upon another: but if the graceful figure which I saw in London—designated by my father 'the youth with the *sour* name and the *sweet* countenance'—has become somewhat corpulent, that is a consequence of good humour as well as good living; and why not partake of venison and claret with the moderation which such a mind will dictate? The sentiment expressed in an old song has occurred to me, when too little allowance has been made for those in exalted situations:—

'Deceit may dress in linen gown,
And truth in diamonds shine.'

From my own contracted sphere I have had some opportunities of perceiving the virtues which, beaming from the zenith of wealth and rank, diffuse their influence to a wide extent."

hours hammer in hand, not much pleased if any one interrupted him, rarely inviting either my brother or myself to accompany him, and, in short, solitary as far as he could manage to be so—unless when some little boy or girl of a friend's family pleaded hard to be allowed to attend him, and mimic his labours with a tiny hammer. To children he was ever the same. No word or look of harshness ever drove them from his side, "and I believe," says a friend[24] who knew him well, "many a mother will bless, many days hence, the accident that threw her offspring into the way of his unlaboured and paternal kindness and instruction."

To his proper ministerial duties he returned with equal zeal. "To these," observes the same dear friend of his, "Mr. Crabbe ever attached great importance. He would put off a meditated journey rather than leave a poor parishioner who required his services; and from his knowledge of human nature, he was able, in a remarkable manner, to throw himself into the circumstances of those who needed his help—*no sympathy was like his;* and no man, perhaps, had the inmost feelings of others more frequently laid open to his inspection. He did not, however, enjoy the happiness which many pastors express in being able to benefit their flocks; never was satisfied that he used the best means; complained that men more imbued with a sense of the terrors of the Lord and less with his mercies, succeeded better; and was glad to ask advice of all in whose judgment and experience he confided. Whatever might be the enjoyments of his study, he never allowed any of the numerous petitioners who called in the course of the day to be dismissed by a servant. He saw them all, and often gave them more pecuniary aid than he thought right; and when the duties of a magistrate were afterwards added to those of a clergyman, these multiplied calls scarcely allowed him necessary relaxation."

His then parishioner, Mr. Taylor, says[25] on the same subject:—"His income amounted to about 800*l.* per annum, a large portion of which he spent in acts of charity. He was the common refuge of the unhappy—

> 'In every family
> Alike in every generation dear,
> The children's favourite, and the grandsire's friend,
> Tried, trusted, and beloved.'

To him it was recommendation enough to be poor and wretched. He was extremely moderate in the exaction of tithes. When told of really poor defaulters, his reply was, 'Let it be—they cannot afford to pay so well as I can to want it—let it be.' His charity was so well known that he was regularly visited by mendicants of all grades. He listened to their long stories of wants and woes, gave them a trifle, and then would say, 'God save you,—I can do no more for you;' but he would sometimes follow them, on reflection, and double or quadruple his gift. He has been known to dive into those obscure scenes of wretchedness and want, where wandering paupers lodge, in order to relieve them. He was, of course, often imposed upon; which discovering, he merely said, 'God forgive them,—I do.'

"He was anxious for the education of the humbler classes. The Sunday-school was a favourite place of resort. When listening to the children, he observed, 'I love to hear the little dears, and now old age has made me a fit companion for them.' He was much beloved by the scholars: on leaving the school he would give them a Bible, with suitable admonition. His health was generally good, though he sometimes suffered from the tic douloureux. Not long before his death he met a poor old woman in the street, whom he had for some time missed at church, and asked her if she had been ill. 'Lord bless you, Sir—no,' was the answer, 'but it is of no use going to *your* church, for I can't hear; you *do* speak so low.'—'Well, well, my good old friend,' said he, slipping half-a-crown into her hand, 'you do quite right in going where you can hear.'"

I may here add, that Mr. Crabbe was a subscriber to most of our great charitable institutions, and, as a member of the British and Foreign Bible Society, was prevailed upon to take the chair at the meetings in Trowbridge; but his aversion to forms and ceremony, and to set speeches, made it a very painful station.

Mr. Crabbe was now (1817 and 1818) busily engaged in finishing the last of his hitherto published works—that which he originally entitled "Remembrances," but which, by Mr. Murray's advice, was produced as "Tales of the Hall." His note-book was at this time ever with him, in his walks, and he would every now and then lay down his hammer to insert a new or amended couplet. He fancied that autumn was, on the whole, the most favourable season for him in the composition of poetry; but there was something in the effect of a sudden fall of snow that appeared to stimulate him in a very extraordinary manner. It was during a great snow-storm that, shut up in his room, he wrote almost *currente calamo* his Sir Eustace Grey. Latterly, he worked chiefly at night, after the family had all retired; and in case any one should wish to be informed of such important particulars, he had generally by him a glass of very weak spirits and water, or negus; and at all times indulged largely in snuff, which last habit somewhat interfered, as he grew old, with the effects of his remarkable attention to personal cleanliness and neatness of dress.

Would the reader like to follow my father into his library?—a scene of unparalleled con-

[24] Miss Hoare.
[25] In a short sketch of his life, published at Bath.

fusion—windows rattling, paint in great request, books in every direction but the right—the table—but no, I cannot find terms to describe it, though the counterpart might be seen, perhaps, not one hundred miles from the study of the justly-famed and beautiful rectory of Bremhill. Once, when we were staying at Trowbridge, in his absence for a few days at Bath, my eldest girl thought she should surprise and please him by putting every book in perfect order, making the best bound the most prominent; but, on his return, thanking her for her good intention, he replaced every volume in its former state; "for," said he, "my dear, grandpapa understands his own confusion better than your order and neatness."

The following is part of a letter to a female friend at Trowbridge, written on the 7th of May, 1819, when Mr. Crabbe was again in London:—

"I came to town with a lady who resides near W——, and her husband is an agriculturist upon a large scale; that, I suppose, is the more consequential name for a farmer; but Mr. —— is a reading and studying farmer, and upon another scale than ordinary persons of that class; and Mrs. —— also reads, and knows what is read and talked of. She spoke of most of those of whom other people talk, and, among other things, asked me if I knew Crabbe? I did not act generously, for I evaded the question: and then she told me that she was invited to meet him at dinner at Mr. West's, the painter. I thought it proper to put the lady right; which, however, was a matter of no importance: she went on in the same way; but I, of necessity, withdrew a part of my attention.

"If I could convey to you a good picture of the Academical Dinner, I would try and paint one; but I can only say, it was singular and grand. We dined in the great room, where the principal pictures were placed, which covered every part of it. Our number I judge about 180 or 200: we had one royal duke, Sussex; the duke of Wellington; we had four ambassadors (at whose table I was placed, with two English gentlemen, luckily); and many of our nobility. The dinner itself was like all very large dinners: but the toasts, music, and speeches after we had dined, were in a high style. Between the healths were short pieces from a band of performers, who were paid for attendance; and there was an imposing air of dignity during the whole time. I had the pleasure of meeting several friends, but Lord Holland was prevented by a fit of the gout. I was not a little surprised to see my picture by Phillips;[26] for, if any, I expected the other;—and they all said that not only the likeness was strong, but the picture good: and I believe it is so, because Lord Holland is to have it copied, and placed with those in his library. I slept two nights at Holland House, and dined three times before Lady H. was weary of me, and even at last I was treated with marvellous kindness. I shall be lectured at ——; but no matter: we must pay for the honours and emoluments which we gain in this world of struggles. I am going to-day to dine at the Thatched House, being elected a member of the Literary Society. When I have seen my brethren, and paid my subscription, I shall better judge whether the honour makes amends for the costs."

[26] Mr. Crabbe had also sat for his portrait to Mr. Pickersgill.

In June, 1819, the "Tales of the Hall" were published by Mr. Murray, who, for them and the remaining copyright of all my father's previous poems, gave the munificent sum of 3000*l*. The new work had, at least, as general approbation as any that had gone before it; and was not the less liked for its opening views of a higher class of society than he had hitherto dealt much in. But I reserve what particulars I have to offer with respect to the subjects of these Tales for notes to its forthcoming republication in the collective edition, of which this little narrative may be considered as the preface. I shall, however, avail myself of the permission to insert in this place a letter lately addressed to Mr. Murray by Mr. Moore, which, among other interesting particulars, gives a curious enough account of some transactions respecting the publication of the new work:—

"Sloperton Cottage, January 1, 1834.

"MY DEAR MR. MURRAY,—Had I been aware that your time of publication was so near, the few scattered notices and recollections of Mr. Crabbe, which it is in my power to furnish for his son's memoir, should have been presented in a somewhat less crude and careless shape than, in this hasty reply to your letter, I shall be able to give them.

"It was in the year 1817, if I recollect right, that, during a visit of a few weeks to London, I first became acquainted with Mr. Crabbe; and my opportunities of seeing him during that period, at Mr. Rogers's and Holland House, were frequent. The circumstance connected with him at that time, which most dwelt upon my memory, was one in which you yourself were concerned; as it occurred in the course of the negotiation which led to your purchase of the copyright of his poems. Though to Crabbe himself, who had up to this period received but little for his writings, the liberal sum which you offered, namely, 3000*l*., appeared a mine of wealth, the two friends whom he had employed to negotiate for him, and who, both exquisite judges of literary merit, measured the marketable value of his works by their own admiration of them, thought that a bargain more advantageous might be made, and (as you, probably, now for the first time learn) applied to another eminent house on the subject. Taking but too just a measure of the state of public taste at that moment, the respectable publishers to whom I allude named, as the utmost which they could afford to give, but a third of the sum which you had the day before offered. In this predicament, the situation of poor Crabbe was most critical. He had seen within his reach a prize far beyond his most sanguine hopes, and was now, by the over-sanguineness of friends, put in danger of losing it. Change of mind, or a feeling of umbrage at this reference to other publishers, might, not unnaturally, it was feared, induce you to decline all further negotiation; and that such was likely to be the result there appeared every

reason to apprehend, as a letter which Crabbe had addressed to you, saying that he had made up his mind to accept your offer, had not yet received any answer.

"In this crisis it was that Mr. Rogers and myself, anxious to relieve our poor friend from his suspense, called upon you, as you must well remember, in Albermarle-Street; and seldom have I watched a countenance with more solicitude, or heard words that gave me much more pleasure, than when, on the subject being mentioned, you said, 'Oh yes—I have heard from Mr. Crabbe, and look upon the matter as all settled.' I was rather pressed, I recollect, for time that morning, having an appointment on some business of my own; but Mr. Rogers insisted that I should accompany him to Crabbe's lodgings, and enjoy the pleasure of seeing him relieved from his suspense. We found him sitting in his room, alone, and expecting the worst; but soon dissipated all his fears by the agreeable intelligence which we brought.

"When he received the bills for 3000*l.*, we earnestly advised that he should, without delay, deposit them in some safe hands; but no—he must 'take them with him to Trowbridge, and show them to his son John. They would hardly believe in his good luck, at home, if they did not see the bills.' On his way down to Trowbridge, a friend at Salisbury, at whose house he rested (Mr. Everett, the banker), seeing that he carried these bills loosely in his waistcoat pocket, requested to be allowed to take charge of them for him, but with equal ill-success. 'There was no fear,' he said 'of his losing them, and he must show them to his son John.

"It was during the same visit of Mr. Crabbe to London that we enjoyed a very agreeable day together at Mr. Horace Twiss's;—a day remarkable, not only for the presence of this great poet, but for the amusing assemblage of other remarkable characters who were there collected; the dinner guests being, besides the Dowager Countess of Cork and the present Lord and Lady Clarendon, Mr. William Spencer, Kean the actor, Colonel Berkeley, and Lord Petersham. Between these two last-mentioned gentlemen Mr. Crabbe got seated at dinner; and though I was not near enough to hear distinctly their conversation, I could see that he was alternately edified and surprised by the information they were giving him.

"In that same year I had the good luck to be present with him at a dinner in celebration of the memory of Burns, where he was one of a large party (yourself among the number), whom I was the means of collecting for the occasion; and who, by the way, subscribed liberally towards a monument to the Scottish bard, of which we have heard nothing ever since. Another public festival to which I accompanied him was the anniversary of the Wiltshire Society; where, on his health being proposed from the chair by Lord Lansdowne, he returned thanks in a short speech, simply, but collectedly, and with the manner of a man not deficient in the nerve necessary for such displays. In looking over an old newspaper report of that dinner, I find, in a speech by one of the guests, the following passage, which, more for its truth than its eloquence, I here venture to cite: 'Of Mr. Crabbe, the speaker would say, that the *Musa severior* which he worships has had no influence whatever on the kindly dispositions of his heart: but that, while, with the eye of a sage and a poet, he looks penetratingly into the darker region of human nature, he stands surrounded by its most genial light himself.'

"In the summer of the year 1824, I passed a few days in his company at Longleat, the noble seat of the Marquis of Bath; and it was there, as we walked about those delicious gardens, that he, for the first time, told me of an unpublished poem which he had by him, entitled, as I think he then said, the 'Departure and the Return,' and the same, doubtless, which you are now about to give to the world. Among the visiters at Longleat, at that time, was the beautiful Madame * * *, a Genoese lady, whose knowledge and love of English literature rendered her admiration of Crabbe's genius doubly flattering. Nor was either the beauty or the praises of the fair Italian thrown away upon the venerable poet; among whose many amiable attributes a due appreciation of the charms of female society was not the least conspicuous. There was, indeed, in his manner to women, a sweetness bordering rather too much upon what the French call *doucereux*, and I remember hearing Miss * * *, a lady known as the writer of some of the happiest jeux d'esprit of our day, say once of him, in allusion to this excessive courtesy—'the cake is no doubt very good, but there is too much sugar to cut through in getting at it.'

"In reference to his early intercourse with Mr. Burke, Sir James Mackintosh had, more than once, said to me, 'It is incumbent on you, Moore, who are Crabbe's neighbour, not to allow him to leave this world without putting on record, in some shape or other, all that he remembers of Burke.' On mentioning this to Mr. Rogers, when he came down to Bowood, one summer, to meet Mr. Crabbe, it was agreed between us that we should use our united efforts to sift him upon this subject, and endeavour to collect whatever traces of Beaconsfield might still have remained in his memory. But, beyond a few vague generalities, we could extract nothing from him whatever, and it was plain that, in his memory at least, the conversational powers of the great orator had left but little vestige. The range of subjects, indeed, in which Mr. Crabbe took any interest was, at all times of his life, very limited; and, at the early period, when he became acquainted with Mr. Burke, when the power of poetry was but newly awakening within him, it may easily be conceived that whatever was unconnected with his own absorbing art, or even with his own peculiar province of that art, would leave but a feeble and transient impression upon his mind.

"This indifference to most of the general topics, whether of learning or politics, which diversify the conversation of men of the world, Mr. Crabbe retained through life; and in this peculiarity, I think, lay one of the causes of his comparative inefficiency, as a member of society,—of that impression, so disproportionate to the real powers of his mind, which he produced in ordinary life. Another cause, no doubt, of the inferiority of his conversation to his writings is to be found in that fate which threw him, early in life, into a state of de-

pendent intercourse with persons far superior to him in rank, but immeasurably beneath him in intellect. The courteous policy which would then lead him to keep his conversation down to the level of those he lived with, afterwards grew into a habit which, in the commerce of the world, did injustice to his great powers.

"You have here all that, at this moment, occurs to me, in the way either of recollection or remark, on the subject of our able and venerated friend. The delightful day which Mr. Rogers and myself passed with him, at Sydenham, you have already, I believe, an account of from my friend, Mr. Campbell, who was our host on the occasion. Mr. Lockhart has, I take for granted, communicated to you the amusing anecdote of Crabbe's interview with the two Scotch lairds—an anecdote which I cherish the more freshly and fondly in my memory, from its having been told me, with his own peculiar humour, by Sir Walter Scott, at Abbotsford. I have, therefore, nothing further left than to assure you how much and truly I am, yours,

"THOMAS MOORE."

During his first and second visits to London, my father spent a good deal of his time beneath the hospitable roof of the late Samuel Hoare, Esquire, on Hampstead Heath. He owed his introduction to this respected family to his friends, Mr. Bowles, and the author of the delightful "Excursions in the West," Mr. Warner; and though Mr. Hoare was an invalid, and little disposed to form new connections, he was so much gratified with Mr. Crabbe's manners and conversation, that their acquaintance soon grew into an affectionate and lasting intimacy.[27] Mr. Crabbe, in subsequent years, made Hampstead his head-quarters on his spring visits, and only repaired from thence occasionally to the brilliant circles of the metropolis. Advancing age, failing health, the tortures of tic douloureux, with which he began to be afflicted about 1820, and, I may add, the increasing earnestness of his devotional feelings, rendered him, in his closing years, less and less anxious to mingle much in the scenes of gaiety and fashion.

The following passage of a letter which he received, in April, 1821, from his amiable correspondent at Ballitore, descriptive of his reception at Trowbridge of her friend Leckey, is highly characteristic:—

"When my feeble and simple efforts have obtained the approbation of the first moral poet of his time, is it surprising that I should be inflated thereby? Yet thou art too benevolent to intend to turn the brain of a poor old woman, by commendation so valued, though thou has practised on my credulity by a little deception; and, from being always accustomed to matter of fact, I generally take what I hear in a literal sense. A gentlewoman once assured me that the husband of her waiting-woman came to her house stark naked—naked as he was born. I said, 'O dear,' and reflected with pity on the poor man's situation; certainly thinking him mad, as maniacs often throw away their clothes. My neighbour went on:—'His coat was so ragged! his hat so shabby!'—and, to my surprise, I found the man dressed, though in a garb ill-befitting the spouse of a lady's maid. And thou madest me believe thou wert in good case, by saying, 'Am I not a great fat rector?' We said, 'it was the exuberance of good humour that caused increase of flesh: but a curate, with six hungry children, staggered our belief. Now we know thy son is thy curate, and that thou art light and active in form, with looks irradiated, and accents modulated by genuine kindness of heart. Thus our friend John James Leckey describes thee; for I have seen his long letter to his mother on the subject of his visit, which, with his letter to me, has placed thee so before our view, that we all but see and hear thee, frequently going out and coming into the room, with a book in thy hand, and a smile and friendly expression on thy lips,—the benevolence which swam in thy eyes, and the cordial shake of both hands with which thou partedst with him,—and thou came out with him in the damp night, and sent thy servant with him to the inn, where he should not have lodged, had there been room for him in thy own house."

It was during the last of my father's very active seasons in London (1822), that he had the satisfaction of meeting with Sir Walter Scott; and the baronet, who was evidently much affected on seeing Mr. Crabbe, would not part with him until he had promised to visit him in Scotland the ensuing autumn. But I much regret that the invitation was accepted for that particular occasion; for, as it happened, the late king fixed on the same time for his northern progress; and, instead of finding Sir Walter in his own mansion in the country, when Mr. Crabbe reached Scotland, in August, the family had all repaired to Edinburgh, to be present amidst a scene of bustle and festivity little favourable to the sort of intercourse with a congenial mind, to which he had looked forward with such pleasing anticipations. He took up his residence, however, in Sir Walter's house in North Castle Street, Edinburgh, and was treated by him and all his connections with the greatest kindness, respect, and attention; and though the baronet's time was much occupied with the business of the royal visit, and he had to dine almost daily at his majesty's table, still my father had an opportunity not to be undervalued of seeing what was to him an aspect of society

[27] I quote what follows from a letter which I have recently been favoured with from Mr. Bowles:—"Perhaps it might be stated in your memoir that, at Bath, I first introduced your father to the estimable family of the Hoares of Hampstead; with whom, through his subsequent life, he was so intimate, and who contributed so much to the happiness of all his later days. I wish sincerely that any incident I could recollect might be such as would contribute to the illustration of his mind, and amiable, gentle, affectionate character; but I never noted an expression or incident at the time, and only preserve an impression of his mild manner, his observations, playful, but often acute, his high and steady principles of religious and moral obligation, his warm feelings against anything which appeared harsh or unjust, and his undeviating and steady attachments."

wholly new. The Highlanders, in particular, their language, their dress, and their manners were contemplated with exceeding interest. I am enabled, by the kindness of one of my father's female friends, to offer some extracts from a short Journal, which he kept for her amusement during his stay in the northern metropolis:—

"Whilst it is fresh in my memory, I should describe the day which I have just passed, but I do not believe an accurate description to be possible. What avails it to say, for instance, that there met at the sumptuous dinner, in all the costume of the Highlanders, the great chief himself and officers of his company. This expresses not the singularity of appearance and manners—the peculiarities of men, all gentlemen, but remote from our society—leaders of clans—joyous company. Then we had Sir Walter Scott's national songs and ballads, exhibiting all the feelings of clanship. I thought it an honour that Glengarry even took notice of me, for there were those, and gentlemen, too, who considered themselves honoured by following in his train. There were, also, Lord Errol, and the Macleod, and the Frazer, and the Gordon, and the Ferguson; and I conversed at dinner with Lady Glengarry, and did almost believe myself a harper, or bard, rather—for harp I cannot strike—and Sir Walter was the life and soul of the whole. It was a splendid festivity, and I felt I know not how much younger."

The lady to whom he addressed the above journal says,—"A few more extracts will, perhaps, be interesting. It is not surprising that, under the guidance of Mr. Lockhart, Mr. Crabbe's walks should have been very interesting, and that all he saw should take an advantageous colouring from such society:"—

"I went to the palace of Holyrood House, and was much interested;—the rooms, indeed, did not affect me,—the old tapestry was such as I had seen before, and I did not much care about the leather chairs, with three legs each, nor the furniture, except in one room—that where Queen Mary slept. The bed has a canopy very rich, but time-stained. We went into the little room where the Queen and Rizzio sat, when his murderers broke in and cut him down as he struggled to escape: they show certain stains on the floor; and I see no reason why you should not believe them made by his blood, if you can.

"Edinburgh is really a very interesting place,—to me very singular. How can I describe the view from the hill that overlooks the palace—the fine group of buildings which form the castle; the bridges, uniting the two towns; and the beautiful view of the Frith and its islands?

"But Sunday came, and the streets were forsaken; and silence reigned over the whole city. London has a diminished population on that day in her streets; but in Edinburgh it is a total stagnation—a quiet that is in itself devout.

"A long walk through divers streets, lanes, and alleys, up to the Old Town, makes me better acquainted with it; a lane of cobblers struck me particularly; and I could not but remark the civility and urbanity of the Scotch poor; they certainly exceed ours in politeness, arising, probably, from minds more generally cultivated.

"This day I dined with Mr. Mackenzie, the Man of Feeling, as he is commonly called. He has not the manner you would expect from his works; but a rare sportsman, still enjoying the relation of a good day, though only the ghost of the pleasure remains.—What a discriminating and keen man is my friend; and I am disposed to think highly of his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart—of his heart—his understanding will not be disputed by any one."

At the table of Mr. Lockhart, with whom he commonly dined when Sir Walter was engaged to the King, he one day sat down with three of the supposed writers or symposiasts of the inimitable "Noctes Ambrosianæ;" viz. his host himself—the far-famed Professor Wilson, whom he termed "that extraordinary man"—and the honest Shepherd of Ettrick, who amused him much by calling for a can of ale, while champagne and claret, and other choice wines, were in full circulation. This must have been an evening cheaply purchased by a journey from Trowbridge. On the other hand, he was introduced, by a friend from the south, to the "Scottish Chiefs" of the opposite clan, though brothers in talent and fame—the present Lord Advocate Jeffrey, Mr. John Archibald Murray, Professor Leslie, and some other distinguished characters.

Before he retired at night, he had generally the pleasure of half an hour's confidential conversation with Sir Walter, when he spoke occasionally of the Waverley Novels—though not as compositions of his own, for that was yet a secret—but without reserve upon all other subjects in which they had a common interest. These *were* evenings!

I am enabled to present a few more particulars of my father's visit to Edinburgh, by the kindness of Mr. Lockhart, who has recently favoured me with the following letter:—

"London, December 26th, 1833.

"Dear Sir,—I am sorry to tell you that Sir Walter Scott kept no diary during the time of your father's visit to Scotland, otherwise it would have given me pleasure to make extracts for the use of your memoirs. For myself, although it is true that, in consequence of Sir Walter's being constantly consulted about the details of every procession and festival of that busy fortnight, the pleasing task of showing to Mr. Crabbe the usual *lions* of Edinburgh fell principally to my share, I regret to say that my memory does not supply me with many traces of his conversation. The general impression, however, that he left on my mind was strong, and, I think, indelible: while all the mummeries and carousals of an interval, in which Edinburgh looked very unlike herself, have faded into a vague and dreamlike indistinctness, the image of your father, then first seen, but long before admired and revered in his works, remains as fresh as if the years that have now passed were but so many days.—His

noble forehead, his bright beaming eye, without any thing of old age about it—though he was then, I presume, above seventy—his sweet, and, I would say, innocent smile, and the calm mellow tones of his voice—all are reproduced the moment I open any page of his poetry: and how much better have I understood and enjoyed his poetry, since I was able thus to connect with it the living presence of the man!

"The literary persons in company with whom I saw him the most frequently were Sir Walter and Henry Mackenzie; and between two such thorough men of the world as they were, perhaps his *apparent* simplicity of look and manners struck one more than it might have done under different circumstances; but all three harmonised admirably together—Mr. Crabbe's avowed ignorance about Gaels, and clans, and tartans, and everything that was at the moment uppermost in Sir Walter's thoughts, furnishing him with a welcome apology for dilating on such topics with enthusiastic minuteness—while your father's countenance spoke the quiet delight he felt in opening his imagination to what was really a new world—and the venerable 'Man of Feeling,' though a fiery Highlander himself at bottom, had the satisfaction of lying by and listening until some opportunity offered itself of hooking in, between the links, perhaps, of some grand chain of poetical imagery, some small comic or sarcastic trait, which Sir Walter caught up, played with, and, with that art so peculiarly his own, forced into the service of the very impression it seemed meant to disturb. One evening, at Mr. Mackenzie's own house, I particularly remember, among the *noctes cœnæque Deûm*.

"Mr. Crabbe had, I presume, read very little about Scotland before that excursion. It appeared to me that he confounded the Inchcolm of the Frith of Forth with the Icolmkill of the Hebrides; but John Kemble, I have heard, did the same. I believe, he really never had known, until then, that a language radically distinct from the English, was still actually spoken within the island. And this recals a scene of high merriment which occurred the very morning after his arrival. When he came down into the breakfast parlour, Sir Walter had not yet appeared there; and Mr. Crabbe had before him two or three portly personages all in the full Highland garb. These gentlemen, arrayed in a costume so novel, were talking in a language which he did not understand; so he never doubted that they were foreigners. The Celts, on their part, conceived Mr. Crabbe, dressed as he was in rather an old-fashioned style of clerical propriety, with buckles in his shoes for instance, to be some learned abbé, who had come on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Waverley; and the result was, that when, a little afterwards, Sir Walter and his family entered the room, they found your father and these worthy lairds hammering away, with pain and labour, to make themselves mutually understood, in most execrable French. Great was the relief, and potent the laughter, when the host interrupted their colloquy with his plain English 'Good-morning.'

"It surprised me, on taking Mr. Crabbe to see the house of Allan Ramsay on the Castle Hill, to find that he had never heard of Allan's name; or, at all events, was unacquainted with his works. The same evening, however, he perused 'The Gentle Shepherd,' and he told me next morning, that he had been pleased with it, but added, 'there is a long step between Ramsay and Burns.' He then made Sir Walter read and interpret some of old Dunbar to him; and said, 'I see that the Ayrshire bard had one giant before him.'

"Mr. Crabbe seemed to admire, like other people, the grand natural scenery about Edinburgh; but when I walked with him to the Salisbury Craigs, where the superb view had then a lively foreground of tents and batteries, he appeared to be more interested with the stratification of the rocks about us, than with any other feature in the landscape. As to the city itself, he said he soon got wearied of the New Town, but could amuse himself for ever in the Old one. He was more than once detected rambling after nightfall by himself, among some of the obscurest wynds and closes; and Sir Walter, fearing that, at a time of such confusion, he might get into some scene of trouble, took the precaution of desiring a friendly *caddie* (see Humphry Clinker), from the corner of Castle Street, to follow him the next time he went out alone in the evening.

"Mr. Crabbe repeated his visits several times to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, and expressed great admiration of the manner in which the patients were treated. He also examined pretty minutely the interior of the Bedlam. I went with him both to the Castle and Queen Mary's apartment in Holyrood House; but he did not appear to care much about either. I remember, however, that when the old dame who showed us Darnley's armour and boots complained of the impudence, as she called it, of a preceding visiter, who had discovered these articles to be relics of a much later age, your father warmly entered into her feelings; and said, as we came away, 'this pedantic puppyism was *inhumane*.'

"The first Sunday he was in Edinburgh, my wife and her sister carried him to hear service in St. George's church, where the most popular of the Presbyterian clergy, the late Dr. Andrew Thomson, then officiated. But he was little gratified either with the aspect of the church, which is large without grandeur, or the style of the ceremonial, which he said was *bald and bad*, or the eloquence of the sermon, which, however, might not be preached by Dr. Thomson himself. Next Sunday he went to the Episcopalian chapel, where Sir Walter Scott's family were in the habit of attending. He said, however, in walking along the streets that day, 'this unusual decorum says not a little for the Scotch system: the silence of these well-dressed crowds is really grand.' King George the Fourth made the same remark.

"Mr. Crabbe entered so far into the feelings of his host, and of the occasion, as to write a set of verses on the royal visit to Edinburgh; they were printed along with many others, but I have no copy of the collection. (Mr. Murray can easily get one from Edinburgh, in case you wish to include those stanzas in your edition of his poetical works.) He also attended one of the king's levees at Holyrood, where his majesty appeared at once to recognise his person, and received him with attention.

"All my friends who had formed acquaintance with Mr. Crabbe on this occasion appeared ever

afterwards to remember him with the same feeling of affectionate respect. Sir Walter Scott and his family parted with him most reluctantly. He had been quite domesticated under their roof, and treated the young people very much as if they had been his own. His unsophisticated, simple, and kind address put every body at ease with him; and, indeed, one would have been too apt to forget what lurked beneath that good-humoured unpretending aspect, but that every now and then he uttered some brief pithy remark, which showed how narrowly he had been scrutinising into whatever might be said or done before him, and called us to remember, with some awe, that we were in the presence of the author of 'The Borough.'

"I recollect that he used to have a lamp and writing materials placed by his bed-side every night; and when Lady Scott told him she wondered the day was not enough for authorship, he answered, 'Dear Lady, I should have lost many a good hit, had I not set down, at once, things that occurred to me in my dreams.'

"I never could help regretting very strongly that Mr. Crabbe did not find Sir Walter at Abbotsford as he had expected to do. The fortnight he passed in Edinburgh was one scene of noise, glare, and bustle—reviews, levees, banquets, and balls—and no person could either see or hear so much of him as might, under other circumstances, have been looked for. Sir Walter, himself, I think, took only one walk with Mr. Crabbe: it was to the ruins of St. Anthony's Chapel, at the foot of Arthur's Seat, which your father wished to see, as connected with part of the Heart of Mid-Lothian. I had the pleasure to accompany them on this occasion; and it was the only one on which I heard your father enter into any details of his own personal history. He told us, that during many months when he was toiling in early life in London, he hardly ever tasted butcher's meat, except on a Sunday, when he dined usually with a tradesman's family, and thought their leg of mutton, baked in the pan, the perfection of luxury. The tears stood in his eyes while he talked of Burke's kindness to him in his distress; and I remember he said, 'The night after I had delivered my letter at his door, I was in such a state of agitation, that I walked Westminster Bridge backwards and forwards until day-light.' Believe me, dear Sir, your very faithful servant,

"J. G. LOCKHART."

Shortly after his return from Scotland, Mr. Crabbe had a peculiarly severe fit of the tic douloureux, to which he thus alludes, in one of his letters to Mrs. Leadbeater:—

"I am visited by a painful disorder, which, though it leaves me many intervals of ease and comfort, yet compels me to postpone much of what may be called the business of life; and thus, having many things to do, and a comparatively short time in which they must be done, I too often defer what would be in itself a pleasing duty, and apply myself to what affords a satisfaction, only because it has been fulfilled."

It was this affliction which prevented his complying with a kind invitation to spend the Christmas of 1822 at Belvoir; on which occasion he received the following letter, which I select as indicating the esteem in which he was held, after his removal from Leicestershire, by the whole of the family of Rutland:—

"Belvoir Castle, Dec. 16, 1822.

"DEAR SIR,—I was much disappointed to find, from your letter of the 11th instant, that you have been obliged once more to abandon (for the present) the idea of a visit to this place. I feel the more regret at this circumstance, from the cause which you have to decline exposure to the cold weather of winter, and the fatigue of travelling. You have no two friends who wish you more cordially well than the Duchess and myself; and I can truly say that, whenever it may be convenient and pleasant to you to visit the castle, a hearty and sincere welcome will await you. I am, dear sir, &c., "RUTLAND."[28]

About the same time, having received an intelligible scrawl from my eldest girl Caroline, who was then in her fourth year, he addressed this letter to the child. Who will require to be told that his coming to Pucklechurch was always looked forward to by the young people as a vision of joy?—

"Trowbridge, 24th Dec., 1822.

"MY DEAR CARRY,—Your very pretty letter gave me a great deal of pleasure; and I choose this, which is my birthday, that in it I may return you my best thanks for your kind remembrance of me; and I will keep your letter laid up in my new Bible, where I shall often see it; and then I shall say, 'This is from my dear little girl at Pucklechurch.' My face is not so painful as it was when I wrote to papa; and I would set out immediately, to see you all, with great pleasure, but I am forced, against my will, to remain at home this week by duty; and that, you know, I must attend to: and then, there is an engagement to a family in this place, Waldron by name, who have friends in Salisbury, and among them a gentleman, who, though he is young, will have grandpapa's company, and grandpapa, being a very old man, takes this for a compliment, and has given his promise, though he is vexed about it, that he will be in Trowbridge at that time; and so he dares not yet fix the day for his visit to his dear Caroline, and her good mamma, and papa, and her little brothers; but he is afraid that papa will not be pleased with this uncertainty; yet I will write to papa the very first hour in which I can say when I shall be free to go after my own pleasure; and I do hope that if it cannot be in the next week, it will be early in the following. And so, my dear, you will say to papa and mamma, 'You must forgive poor grandpapa, because he is so puzzled that he does not know what he can do, and so vexed beside, that he cannot do as his wishes and his affection would lead him; and

[28] I extract what follows from a letter with which his Grace honoured me after my father's death:—"It is indeed true that my lamented Duchess vied with myself in sincere admiration of his talents and virtues, and in warm and hearty esteem for your father."

you know, dear papa and mamma, that he grows to be a very old man, and does not know how to get out of these difficulties, but I am sure that he loves to come to us, and will be here as soon as ever he can.' I hope, my dear Carry, that Master Davidson is well after the waltz, and his lady with whom he danced. I should have liked very much to have seen them. I gave your love to uncle John, and will to your other uncles when I see them: I dare say they all love you; for good little girls, like my Carry, are much beloved. Pray, give my kind respects to Miss Joyces. You are well off in having such ladies to take so much pains with you; and you improve very prettily under their care. I have written a very long letter to my Carry; and I think we suit each other, and shall make fit correspondents: that is, writers of letters. Caroline to grandpapa, and grandpapa to Caroline. God bless my dear little girl. I desire earnestly to see you, and am your very affectionate GRANDPAPA."

I close this chapter with a fragment of a letter from his friend, Mr. Norris Clark, of Trowbridge :—

"I wish it was in my power to furnish you with anything worth relating of your late father. The fault is in my memory; for, if I could recollect them, hundreds of his conversations would be as valuable as Johnson's, though he never talked for effect. I will mention two which impressed me, as being the first and last I had with him. When I called on him, soon after his arrival, I remarked that his house and garden were pleasant and secluded: he replied that he preferred walking in the streets, and observing the faces of the passers-by, to the finest natural scene. The last time I spoke to him was at our amateur concert; after it concluded, which was with the overture to Freyschutz, he said, he used to prefer the simple ballad, but he now, by often hearing more scientific music, began to like it best. I have no doubt he had a most critical musical ear, as every one must have perceived who heard him read. I never heard more beautifully correct recitative."

CHAPTER X.

1823—1832.

The closing Years of Mr. Crabbe's Life—Annual Excursions—Domestic Habits—Visits to Pucklechurch—His last Tour to Clifton, Bristol, &c.—His Illness and Death—His Funeral.

It now remains to sum up this narrative with a few particulars respecting the closing years of Mr. Crabbe's henceforth retired life. Though he went every year to Mr. Hoare's, at Hampstead (the death of the head of that family having rather increased than diminished his attachment for its other members), and each season accompanied them on some healthful excursion to the Isle of Wight, Hastings, Ilfracombe, or Clifton; and though, in their company, he saw occasionally not a little of persons peculiarly interesting to the public, as well as dear to himself,—as, for example, Mr. Wilberforce, Mrs. Joanna Baillie, Miss Edgeworth, and Mrs. Siddons,—and though, in his passings through town, he generally dined with Mr. Rogers, Lord Holland, and Mr. Murray, and there met, from time to time, his great brothers in art, Wordsworth and Southey,—for both of whom he felt a cordial respect and affection,—still, his journals, in those latter years, are so briefly drawn up, that, by printing them, I should be giving little more than a list of names. While, at home, he seldom visited much beyond the limits of his parish—the houses of Mr. Waldron and Mr. Norris Clark being his more familiar haunts; and in his own study he continued, unless when interrupted by his painful disorder, much of the habits and occupations which have already been described, comprising poetry, and various theological essays, besides sermons; of all of which specimens may hereafter be made public. The manuscript volumes he left behind him at his death, not including those of the rough copies of his published works, amount in number to *twenty-one*. The gradual decline of his health, but unshaken vigour of his understanding, will be, perhaps, sufficiently illustrated by the following extracts from his note-books, and his own letters to his friends and family :—

"Aldborough, October, 1823.

"Thus once again, my native place, I come
Thee to salute—my earliest, latest home:
Much are we alter'd both, but I behold
In thee a youth renew'd—whilst I am old.
The works of man from dying we may save,
But man himself moves onward to the grave."

To Mrs. Leadbeater.

"Trowbridge, June, 1824.

"I must go to town, and there be stimulated by conversations on the subjects of authorships, and all that relates to the business of the press. I find, too, that I can dedicate more time to this employment in London than in this seat of business, where every body comes at their own time; and, having driven the mind from its purposes, leave a man to waste no small portion of it in miscellaneous reading, and other amusement, such as nursing and construing the incipient meanings that come and go in the face of an infant. My grand-daughter and I begin to be companions; and the seven months and the seventy years accord very nicely, and will do so, probably (the parties living), for a year or two to come; when, the man becoming weaker and the child stronger, there will come an inequality to disturb the friendship.

"I think something more than two years have passed, since the disease, known by a very formidable name, which I have never consented to adopt, attacked me. It came like momentary shocks of a grievous tooth-ache; and, indeed, I was imprudent enough to have one tooth extracted which appeared to be most affected; but the loss of this guiltless and useful tooth had not one beneficial consequence. For many months the pain came, sometimes on a slight touch, as the application of

a towel or a razor, and it sometimes came without any apparent cause, and certainly was at one time alarming, more especially when I heard of operations, as cutting down and scraping the bone, &c.; but these failing, and a mode of treating the disease being found,[1] I lost my fears, and took blue pills and medicines of like kind for a long season, and with good success."

To a Lady at Trowbridge.

"Beccles, May 10, 1825.

"A letter from my son to-day, gives me pain, by its account of your illness: I had hope of better information; and though he writes that there is amendment, yet he confesses it is slow, and your disorder is painful too. That men of free lives, and in habits of intemperance, should be ill, is to be expected; but we are surprised, as well as grieved, when frequent attacks of this kind are the lot of the temperate, the young, and the careful: still, it is the will of Him who afflicts not his creatures without a cause, which we may not perceive, but must believe; for he is all wisdom and goodness, and sees the way to our final happiness, when we cannot. In all kinds of affliction, the Christian is consoled by the confiding hope, that such trials, well borne, will work for glory and happiness, as they work in us patience and resignation. In our pains and weakness we approach nearer, and learn to make our supplications to a merciful Being, as to a parent, who, if he doth not withdraw the evil from us, yet gives us strength to endure and be thankful.—I grant there is much that we cannot know nor comprehend in the government of this world; but we know that our duty is to submit, because there is enough we can see to make us rest in hope and comfort, though there be much that we cannot understand. We know not why one in the prime of life should suffer long; and, while suffering, should hear of threescore persons, of every age and station, and with minds, some devoted to their God, and others to this world altogether, all in one dreadful moment to be sunk in the ocean, and the stillness of death to surround them. But though this and a number of other things are mysteries to us, they are all open to Him from whom nothing can be hidden. Let us, then, my dear Miss W., have confidence in this, that we are tried, and disciplined, and prepared—for another state of being; and let not our ignorance in what is not revealed, prevent our belief in what is. 'I do not know,' is a very good answer to most of the questions put to us by those who wish for help to unbelief. But why all this? will you ask: first, because I love you very much, and then you will recollect that I have had, of late, very strong admonition to be serious; for though the pain of itself be not dangerous, yet the weakness it brought on, and still brings, persuades me that not many such strokes are needed to demolish a frame which has been seventy years moving, and not always regulated with due caution: but I will not fatigue you any more now, nor, I hope, at any future time. I trust, my dear friend, to see you in good health, cheerful and happy, relying entirely on that great and good Being, whose ways are not ours, neither can we comprehend them; and our very ignorance should teach us perfect reliance on his wisdom and goodness. I had a troubled night, and am thinking of the time when you will kindly send, and sometimes call, to hear, 'how Mr. Crabbe does to-day, and how he rested;' for though we must all take the way of our friend departed, yet mine is the natural first turn; and you will not wonder that restless nights put me in mind of this."

A friend having for the first time seen the "Rejected Addresses," had written with some soreness of the parody on my father's poetry; he thus answers:—

"You were more feeling than I was, when you read the excellent parodies of the young men who wrote the 'Rejected Addresses.' There is a little ill-nature—and, I take the liberty of adding, undeserved ill-nature—in their prefatory address; but in their versification, they have done me admirably. They are extraordinary men; but it is easier to imitate style, than to furnish matter."[2]

In June, 1825, he thus writes from Mr. Hoare's villa at Hampstead:—

"Hampstead, June, 1825.

"My time passes I cannot tell how pleasantly, when the pain leaves me. To-day I read one of my long stories to my friends, and Mrs. Joanna Baillie and her sister. It was a task; but they encouraged me, and were, or seemed, gratified. I rhyme at Hampstead with a great deal of facility, for nothing interrupts me but kind calls to something pleasant; and though all this makes parting painful, it will, I hope, make me resolute to enter upon my duties diligently when I return.—I am too much indulged. Except a return of pain, and that not severe, I have good health; and if my walks are not so long, they are more frequent. I have seen many things and many people; have seen Mr. Southey and Mr. Wordsworth; have been some days with Mr. Rogers, and at last have been at the Athenæum, and purpose to visit the Royal Institution; and have been to Richmond in a steam-boat; seen, also, the picture galleries, and some other ex-

[1] The kind and skilful physician on whose advice my father relied was Dr. Kerrison, of New Burlington Street.

[2] In the new edition of the "Rejected Addresses," I find a note, part of which is as follows:—"The writer's first interview with the Poet Crabbe, who may be designated Pope in worsted stockings, took place at Wm. Spencer's villa at Petersham, close to what that gentleman called his gold-fish pond, though it was scarcely three feet in diameter, throwing up a *jet-d'eau* like a thread. The venerable bard, seizing both the hands of his satirist, exclaimed, with a good-humoured laugh, 'Ah, my old enemy, how do you do?' In the course of conversation he expressed great astonishment at his popularity in London; adding, 'In my own village they think nothing of me.' The subject happening to be the inroads of time upon beauty, the writer quoted the following lines:—

'Six years had pass'd, and forty ere the six,
When Time began to play his usual tricks:
My locks, once comely in a virgin's sight,
Locks of pure brown, now felt th' encroaching white.
Gradual each day I liked my horses less,
My dinner more—I learnt to play at chess.'

'That 's very good!' cried the bard; 'whose is it?'—'Your own.'—'Indeed! hah! well, I had quite forgotten it.'" The writer proceeds to insinuate, that this was a piece of affectation on the part of my father. If Mr. Smith had written as many verses, and lived as long, as Mr. Crabbe, he would, I fancy, have been incapable of expressing such a suspicion.

hibitions: but I passed one Sunday in London with discontent, doing no duty myself nor listening to another; and I hope my uneasiness proceeded not merely from breaking a habit. We had a dinner social and pleasant, if the hours before it had been rightly spent: but I would not willingly pass another Sunday in the same manner. I have my home with my friends here (Mrs. Hoare's), and exchange it with reluctance for the Hummums occasionally. Such is the state of the garden here, in which I walk and read, that, in a morning like this, the smell of the flowers is fragrant beyond anything I ever perceived before. It is what I can suppose may be in Persia, or other Oriental countries—a Paradisiacal sweetness.

"I am told that I or my verses, or perhaps both, have abuse in a book of Mr. Colburn's publishing, called 'The Spirit of the Times.' I believe I felt something indignant: but my engraved seal dropped out of the socket and was lost, and I perceived this vexed me much more than the 'spirit' of Mr. Hazlitt."

"Trowbridge, Feb. 3, 1826.

"Your letter, my dear Mrs. Leadbeater, was dated the 9th of the tenth month of last year; just at a time when I was confined in the house of friends, most attentive to me during the progress and termination of a painful disease to which I had been long subject, though I was not at any time before so suddenly and so alarmingly attacked. I had parted from my son, his wife, and child, about ten days before, and judged myself to be in possession of health, strength, and good spirits fitted for my journey—one about 200 miles from this place, and in which I had pleased myself with the anticipation of meeting with relatives dear to me, and many of the friends of my earlier days. I reached London with no other symptom of illness than fatigue; but was indisposed on the second night, and glad to proceed to Hampstead on the third day, where I found my accustomed welcome in the house of two ladies, who have been long endeared to me by acts of unceasing kindness, which I can much better feel than describe. On the second evening after my arrival, Miss Hoare and I went to the place of worship to which she is accustomed, where, just as the service of the day terminated, a sudden and overpowering attack of the disease to which I allude was the commencement of an illness which was troublesome to my friends about three weeks, but, as the pain gradually passed away, was scarcely to be esteemed as a trial to me, or to the resignation and patience which pain should give birth to. I am now—let me be thankful—in a great measure freed from pain, and have, probably, that degree of health, and even exertion, which, at my age, is a blessing rather to be desired than expected; the allotted threescore and ten has passed over me, and I am now in my seventy-second year! thankful, I hope, for much that I have, and, among other things, for the friendship of some very estimable beings. I feel the heaviness and languor of time, and that even in our social visits at this season. I cannot enjoy festivity; with friends long known I can be easy, and even cheerful,—but the pain of exertion, which I think it a duty to make, has its influence over me, and I wonder—be assured that I am perfectly sincere in this—I wonder when young people—and there are such—seem to desire that I should associate with them."

"Pucklechurch, 1826.

"Caroline, now six years old, reads incessantly and insatiably. She has been travelling with John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim,' and enjoyed a pleasure never, perhaps, to be repeated. The veil of religious mystery, that so beautifully covers the outward and visible adventures, is quite enchanting. The dear child was caught reading by her sleeping maid, at five o'clock this morning, impatient—'t is our nature—to end her pleasure."

"Trowbridge, 1827.

"I often find such difficulties in visiting the sick, that I am at a loss what thoughts to suggest to them, or to entertain of them. Home is not better (to the aged), but it is better loved and more desired; for in other places we cannot indulge our humours and tastes so well, nor so well comply with those of other people.

"In the last week was our fair; and I am glad that quiet is restored. When I saw four or five human beings, with painted faces and crazy dresses and gestures, trying to engage and entice the idle spectators to enter their showhouse, I felt the degradation; for it seemed like man reduced from his natural rank in the creation: and yet, probably, they would say,—'What can we do? We were brought up to it, and we must eat.'

"I think the state of an old but hale man is the most comfortable and least painful of any stage in life; but it is always liable to infirmities: and this is as it should be. It would not be well to be in love with life when so little of it remains."

The two following extracts are from notes written to the same kind friend, on his birthday of 1827, and on that of 1828:—

"Parsonage, Dec. 24, 1827.—There can be only one reason for declining your obliging invitation; and that is, the grievous stupidity that grows upon me daily. I have read of a country where they reckon all men after a certain period of life to be no longer fitted for companionship in business or pleasure, and so they put the poor useless beings out of their way. I think I am beyond that time; but as we have no such prudent custom, I will not refuse myself the good you so kindly offer, and you will make due allowance for the stupidity aforesaid."

"Parsonage, Dec. 24, 1828.—This has been a very busy day with me. My kind neighbours have found out that the 24th of this month is my birthday, and I have not only had music in the evening, but small requests all the day long, for 'Sure the minister will not mind giving us a trifle on his birthday'—and so they have done me the honour of making a trial; as if it were a joyful thing for a man to enter into his seventy-sixth year; and I grant it ought to be. But your time is precious, and I must not detain you. Mr. ——, I hear, has been with you to-day. I have never yet been able to fulfil my engagements. He

puzzles me. It is strange, I can but think, for a man of sense and reflection openly to avow disbelief of a religion that has satisfied the wisest, converted the most wicked, and consoled the most afflicted of our fellow-creatures. He says he is happy; and it may be so. I am sure I should not, having the same opinions. Certainly, if we wait till all doubts be cleared away, we shall die doubting. I ought to ask your pardon, and I do. How I came to be in a grave humour, I know not; for I have been dancing with my little girl to all kinds of tunes, and, I dare say, with all kinds of steps, such as old men and children are likely to exhibit."

In October, 1829, he thus writes to the present biographer:—

"I am in truth not well. It is not pain, nor can I tell what it is. Probably when you reach the year I am arrived at, you will want no explanation. But I should be a burden to you: the dear girls and boys would not know what to make of a grandfather who could not romp nor play with them."

In January, 1830, he thus addresses his grand-daughter:—

"You and I both love reading, and it is well for me that I do; but at your time reading is but one employment, whereas with me it is almost all. And yet I often ask myself, at the end of my volumes,—Well! what am I the wiser, what the better, for this? Reading for amusement only, and, as it is said, merely to kill time, is not the satisfaction of a reasonable being. At your age, my dear Caroline, I read every book which I could procure. Now, I should wish to procure only such as are worth reading; but I confess I am frequently disappointed."

Dining one day with a party at Pucklechurch, about this period, some one was mentioning a professor of gastronomy, who looked to the time when his art should get to such perfection as to keep people alive for ever. My father said, most emphatically, "God forbid!" He had begun to feel that old age, even without any very severe disease, is not a state to hold tenaciously. Towards the latter end of the last year he had found a perceptible and general decline of the vital powers, without any specific complaint of any consequence; and though there were intervals in which he felt peculiarly renovated, yet, from the autumn of 1828, he could trace a marked, though still very gradual change; or, as he himself called it, a breaking up of the constitution; in which, however, the mind partook not, for there was no symptom of mental decay, except, and that only slightly and partially, in the memory.

But the most remarkable characteristic of his decline was the unabated warmth of his affections. In general, the feelings of old age are somewhat weakened and concentrated under the sense of a precarious life, and of personal deprivation; but his interest in the welfare of others, his sympathy with the sufferings or happiness of his friends, and even in the amusements of children, continued to the last as vivid as ever: and he thought, spoke, and wrote of his departure with such fortitude and cheerful resignation, that I have not that pain in recording his latter days which, under other circumstances, would have made the termination of this memoir a task scarcely to be endured.

A most valued friend of my father describes his decline in terms so affectionate, beautiful, and original, that I have obtained her permission to add this to other passages from the same pen:—

"Mr. Crabbe was so much beloved, that the approaches of age were watched by his friends with jealousy, as an enemy undermining their own happiness; and the privations inflicted upon him by its infirmities were peculiarly distressing. There is sometimes an apathy attending advanced life, which makes its accompanying changes less perceptible; but when the dull ear, and dim eye, and lingering step, and trembling hand, are for ever interfering with the enjoyments of a man, who would otherwise delight in the society of the young and active—such a contrast between the body and mind can only be borne with fortitude by those who look hopefully for youth renewed in another state of existence. 'It cannot be supposed,' says the Roman orator, 'that *Nature*, after having widely distributed to all the preceding periods of life their peculiar and proper enjoyments, should have neglected, like an indolent poet, the last act of the human drama, and left it destitute of suitable advantages:'—and yet it would be difficult to point out in what these consist. On the contrary, *Nature* discovers her destitute state, and manifests it in peevishness and repining, unless a higher principle than *Nature* takes possession of the mind, and makes it sensible, that, 'though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' It was by this principle that Mr. Crabbe was actuated; and he at times gave such proofs of his confidence in the promises of the Gospel, that the spot on which he expressed these hopes with peculiar energy is now looked upon by the friend who conversed with him as holy ground. But he rarely spoke thus; for he had such an humble spirit, so much fear of conveying the impression that he believed himself accepted, that the extent of these enjoyments was known to few. Thus, however, the privations of age and frequent suffering were converted into blessings, and he acknowledged their advantage in weaning him from the world. Considering life as the season of discipline, and looking back to the merciful restraints, and also acknowledging the many encouragements, which he had received from an over-ruling Providence, he was not impatient under the most troublesome and vexatious infirmity, or over-anxious to escape that evil which, if rightly received, might add to the evidence and security of the happiness hereafter. He had a notion, perhaps somewhat whimsical, that we shall be gainers in a future

state by the cultivation of the intellect, and always affixed a sense of this nature also to the more important meaning of the word 'talents' in the parable: and this stimulus doubtless increased his avidity for knowledge, at a period when such study was of little use besides the amusement of the present hour."

Preparing to visit Hastings, in September, 1830, with his friends from Hampstead Heath, he says:—

"I feel, in looking forward to this journey, as if there was a gulf fixed between us: and yet what are three or four weeks when passed! When anticipated, they appear as if they might be productive of I know not what pleasures and adventures; but when they are gone, we are almost at a loss to recollect any incident that occurred. My preaching days are almost over. On the Sunday evening I feel too much like a labourer who rejoices that his day's work is done, rather than one who reflects how it was performed."

Some friends having offered a visit at the parsonage during his absence on this occasion, he thus wrote to my brother:—

"Now, my dear John, do remember that you must make the house what it should be. Do me honour, I pray you, till I can take it upon myself: all that the cellar can afford, or the market, rests with you and your guests, who know very well in what good living consists. I doubt if G—— drinks claret. Mr. Spackman, I think, does; at least he produces it, and to him it should be produced. Now do, my good fellow, go along with me in this matter: you know all I would have, as well as I do myself."

This short extract will exemplify another characteristic. Always generous and liberal, I think he grew more so in the later portion of his life—not less careful, but more bountiful and charitable. He lived scrupulously within the limits of his income, increased by the produce of his literary exertions; but he freely gave away all that he did not want for current expenses. I know not which of his relatives have not received some substantial proofs of this generous spirit.

The following letter from Hastings, dated 28th September, 1830, produced in his parsonage feelings which I shall not attempt to describe:—

To the Rev. John Crabbe.

"My dear Son,—I write (as soon as the post permits) to inform you that I arrived in the evening of yesterday, in nearly the same state as I left you, and full as well as I expected, though a rather alarming accident made me feel unpleasantly for some hours, and its effects in a slight degree remain. I had been out of the coach a very short time, while other passengers were leaving it on their arrival at their places; and, on getting into the coach again, and close beside it, a gig, with two men in it, came on as fast as it could drive, which I neither saw nor heard till I felt the shaft against my side. I fell, of course, and the wheel went over one foot and one arm. Twenty people were ready to assist a stranger, who in a few minutes was sensible that the alarm was all the injury. Benjamin was ready, and my friends took care that I should have all the indulgence that even a man frightened could require. Happily I found them well, and we are all this morning going to one of the churches, where I hope I shall remember that many persons, under like circumstances, have never survived to relate their adventure. I hope to learn very shortly that you are all well: remember me to all with you, and to our friends, westward and elsewhere. Write—briefly if you must, but write. From your affectionate father, Geo. Crabbe.

"P.S.—You know my poor. Oram had a shilling on Sunday; but Smith, the bed-ridden woman, Martin, and Gregory, the lame man, you will give to as I would; nay, I must give somewhat more than usual; and if you meet with my other poor people, think of my accident, and give a few additional shillings for me; and I must also find some who want where I am, for my danger was great, and I must be thankful in every way I can."

On the 2nd of the next month he thus writes:—

"I do not eat yet with appetite, but am terribly dainty. I walk by the sea and inhale the breeze in the morning, and feel as if I were really hungry; but it is not the true hunger, for, whatever the food, I am soon satisfied, or rather satiated: but all in good time; I have yet been at Hastings but one week. Dear little Georgy! I shall not forget her sympathy: my love to her, and to my two younger dears, not forgetting mamma."

A friend, who was with him in this expedition, thus speaks of him:—

"He was able, though with some effort, to join a party to Hastings in the autumn, and passed much of his time on the sea-shore, watching the objects familiar to him in early life. It was on a cold November morning that he took his last look at his favourite element, in full glory, the waves foaming and dashing against the shore. He returned, with the friends whom he had been visiting, to town, and spent some weeks with them in its vicinity, enjoying the society to which he was strongly attached, but aware for how short a period those pleasures were to last. Having made a morning call in Cavendish Square, where he had met Mrs. Joanna Baillie, for whom he had a high esteem, and several members of her family, he was affected to tears, on getting into the carriage after taking leave of them, saying, 'I shall never meet this party again.' His affections knew no decline. He was never, apparently, the least tenacious of a reputation for talent; but most deeply sensible of every proof of regard and affection. One day, when absent from home, and suffering from severe illness, he received a letter from Miss Waldron, informing him of the heartfelt interest which many of his parishioners had expressed for his welfare. Holding up this letter, he said, with great emotion, 'Here is something worth living for!'"

I may, perhaps, as well insert in this place a kind letter with which I have lately been honoured by the great Poetess of the Passions:—

From Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

"I have often met your excellent father at Mr. Hoare's, and frequently elsewhere; and he was always, when at Hampstead, kind enough to visit my sister and me; but, excepting the good sense and gentle courtesy of his conversation and manners, I can scarcely remember anything to mention in particular. Well as he knew mankind under their least favourable aspect, he seemed never to forget that they were his brethren, and to love them even when most *unloveable*—if I may be permitted to use the word. I have sometimes been almost provoked by the very charitable allowances which he made for the unworthy, so that it required my knowledge of the great benevolence of his own character, and to receive his sentiments as a follower of Him who was the friend of publicans and sinners, to reconcile me to such lenity. On the other hand, I have sometimes remarked that, when a good or generous action has been much praised, he would say in a low voice, as to himself, something that insinuated a more mingled and worldly cause for it. But this never, as it would have done from any other person, gave the least offence; for you felt quite assured as he uttered it, that it proceeded from a sagacious observance of mankind, and was spoken in sadness, not in the spirit of satire.

"In regard to his courtesy relating to the feelings of others in smaller matters, a circumstance comes to my recollection, in which you will, perhaps, recognise your father. While he was staying with Mrs. Hoare a few years since, I sent him one day the present of a blackcock, and a message with it, that Mr. Crabbe should look at the bird before it was delivered to the cook, or something to that purpose. He looked at the bird as desired, and then went to Mrs. Hoare in some perplexity, to ask whether he ought not to have it stuffed, instead of eating it. She could not, in her own house, tell him that it was simply intended for the larder; and he was at the trouble and expense of having it stuffed, lest I should think proper respect had not been put upon my present. This both vexed and amused me at the time, and was remembered as a pleasing and peculiar trait of his character.

"He was a man fitted to engage the esteem and good-will of all who were fortunate enough to know him well; and I have always considered it as one of the many obligations I owe to the friendship of Mrs. and Miss Hoare, that through them I first became acquainted with this distinguished and amiable poet. Believe me, with all good wishes, &c.

"J. Baillie."

I shall add here part of a letter which I have received from another of what I may call my father's *Hampstead* friends—Mr. Duncan, of Bath, well known for the extent and eleganee of his accomplishments. He says:—

"My first acquaintance with him was at the house of Mr. Hoare, at Hampstead; by whose whole family he appeared to be regarded as a beloved and venerated relation. I was much struck, as I think every one who was ever in his company must have been, by his peculiar suavity, courtesy, and even humility of manner. There was a self-renunciation, a carelessness of attracting admiration, which formed a remarkable contrast with the ambitious style of conversation of some other literati, in whose company I have occasionally seen him. I have often thought that a natural politeness and sensitive regard for the feelings of others occasioned him to reject opportunities of saying smart and pointed things, or of putting his remarks into that epigrammatic, and, perhaps, not always extemporaneous form, which supplies brilliant scraps for collectors of anecdotes. His conversation was easy, fluent, and abundant in correct information; but distinguished chiefly by good sense and good feeling. When the merits of contemporary authors were discussed, his disapprobation was rather to be collected from his unwillingness to dwell on obvious and too prominent faults, than from severity in the exposure of them. But his sympathy with good expression of good feelings, such as he found, for example, in the pages of Scott, roused him to occasional fervour. If he appeared at any time to show a wish that what he said might be remembered, it was when he endeavoured to place in a simple and clear point of view, for the information of a young person, some useful truth, whether historical, physiological, moral, or religious. He had much acquaintance with botany and geology; and, as you know, was a successful collector of local specimens; and as I, and doubtless many others, know, was a liberal imparter of his collected store.

"The peculiar humour which gives brilliancy to his writings, gave a charm to his conversation: but its tendency was to excite pleasurable feeling, by affording indulgence to harmless curiosity by a peep behind the scenes of human nature, rather than to produce a laugh. I remember to have heard a country gentleman relate an instance of his good temper and self-command. They were travelling in a stage-coach from Bath; and as they approached Calne, the squire mentioned the names of certain poets of the neighbourhood; expressed his admiration of your father's earlier works;—but ventured to hint that one of the latter, I forget which, was a failure, and that he would do well to lay his pen aside. 'Sir,' said your father, 'I am quite of your opinion. Artists and poets of all ages have fallen into the same error. Time creeps on so gently, that they never find out that they are growing old!' 'So,' said the squire, 'we talked of Gil Blas and the Archbishop, and soon digressed into talk of parish matters and justice business. I was delighted with my companion, who soon alighted; and I only learned by inquiring of the coachman who had been my fellow-traveller.' I told this to your father, who laughed, remembered the incident, and said, 'the squire, perhaps, was right; but you know I was an incompetent judge upon that subject.'"

I have already mentioned his visits to Pucklechurch. Great was the pleasure of our household in expecting him, for his liberality left no domestic without an ample remembrance. What

listening for the chaise among the children! It is heard rattling through the street—it is in the churchyard—at the door. His pale face is lighted with pleasure—as benevolent, as warm-hearted as in his days of youth and strength; but age has sadly bent his once tall stature, and his hand trembles. What a package of books—what stores for the table—what presents for the nursery! Little tales, as nearly resembling those which had delighted his own infancy as modern systems permit—one quite after his own heart—the German Nursery Stories.[3] After dinner the children assemble round the dessert, and perhaps he reads them the story of the Fisherman, his greatest favourite. How often have I heard him repeat to them the invocation—

> "O, man of the sea, come listen to me,
> For Alice, my wife, the plague of my life,
> Hath sent me to beg a boon of thee."

And he would excite their wonder and delight, with the same evident satisfaction, that I so well remembered in my early days. Of the morose feelings of age, repining for lost pleasures, he knew nothing; for his youth had been virtuous, his middle age intellectual and manly, his decline honourable and honoured. Such minds covet not, envy not, the advantages of youth, but regard them with benevolent satisfaction—perhaps not unmixed with a species of apprehensive pity; for their fiery ordeal is not yet past.

He loved, particularly at last, to converse on early scenes and occurrences; and when we began that theme, it was generally a late hour before we parted. Unfortunately, I meditated this record too recently to reap the full advantage. On these reminiscences, even at the date to which my narrative has now come, his spirits have risen, and his countenance has brightened into the very expression which marked his happiest mood in his most vigorous years.

In the morning, even in the roughest weather, he went his way (always preferring to be alone) to some of our quarries of blue lias, abounding in fossils, stopping to cut up any herb not quite common, that grew in his path; and he would return loaded with them. The dirty fossils were placed in our best bed-room, to the great diversion of the female part of my family; the herbs stuck in the borders, among my choice flowers, that he might see them when he came again. I never displaced one of them.

When we had friends to meet him, with what ease and cheerfulness would he enter into the sociality of the evening, taking his subject and his tone from those around him; except when he was under the too frequently recurring pain, and then he was sometimes obliged to retire. Few aged persons so readily acquired an attachment to strangers: he was ever ready to think warmly of every one who treated him with kindness. There was no acrimony in him; and to the end he had that accommodating mind in conversation which often marks the young, but which is rarely found at the age of threescore and ten.

We dreaded his departure. It was justly remarked by one of his nieces, that he left a feeling of more melancholy vacancy when he quitted a house than any other person,—even than those whose presence afforded more positive pleasure. "I hope," said she, one day, very earnestly, "that my uncle will not come into Suffolk this year; for I shall dread his going away all the time he is with us." He generally left the young people all in tears—feeling strongly, and not having the power to conceal it. The stooping form, the trembling step, the tone and manner of his farewell, especially for the last few years, so hurried, so foreboding, so affectionate, overcame us all.

My brother has the following observations on his perseverance in his clerical duties:—"With my father's active mind and rooted habits—for he did not omit the duty on one Sunday for nearly forty years—it would have been distressing to him to have ceased to officiate; but the pain to which he was subject, was frequently very severe; and when attacked during the service, he was obliged to stop and press his hand hard to his face, and then his pale countenance became flushed. Under these paroxysms, his congregation evidently felt much for him; and he often hesitated whether he had not better give it up altogether. I was accustomed to join him in the vestry-room, after reading the prayers; and whilst sitting by the fire, waiting till the organ had ceased, I well recollect the tone of voice, firm and yet depressed, in which he would say, 'Well!—one Sunday more;' or 'a few Sundays more, but not many.' I was astonished, however, to observe how much his spirits and strength were always renovated by an absence from home. He continued to officiate till the last two Sundays before his decease."

In the midst of one of the radical tumults of this period, he thus wrote to Mr. Phillips, the eminent Academician, whose portrait of him had been recently re-engraved:—

"Amid the roar of cannon, and that of a tumultuous populace, assembled to show their joy, and to demand shows of the same kind from those who reside among them, I retire for a few minutes, to reply to your favour: and this must be my apology if I do not thank you as I ought, for the kindness you express, and your purpose to oblige me in my wishes to possess a few copies of the engraving, of which I heard such a highly-approving account, by my friend Mr. Dawson Turner, of Yarmouth, a gentleman upon whose taste I can rely; nor ought I to omit to mention that of his lady, who herself

[3] The translation of Grimm's Kinder- und Haus-Märchen.

designs in a superior manner, and is an excellent judge of all works of the kind. If I were sure of having a room to retire to on the morrow, with a whole window in it, I believe I should postpone my acknowledgment of your letter; but there is no setting bounds to the exertions of a crowd, in a place like this, when once they entertain the idea, be it right or wrong, that you are not of their opinion."

On the 19th of January, 1831, he thus writes to Mr. Henchman Crowfoot, of Beccles, the relative of his son John's wife, and for whom he had a strong partiality :—

"19th January, 1831.

"A long journey, as that would be into Suffolk, I contemplate with mixed feelings of hope and apprehension. After a freedom of several months' duration, I have once more to endure the almost continual attacks of the pain over which I boasted a victory, that, alas! is by no means complete. Again I have recourse to steel, and again feel relief; but I am nearly convinced that travelling in stage-coaches, however good the roads, has a tendency to awaken this kind of disease, which (I speak reverendly) is not dead, but sleepeth. Yet I should rejoice to revisit Beccles, where every one is kind to me, and where every object I view has the appearance of friendship and welcome. Beccles is the home of past years, and I could not walk through the streets as a stranger. It is not so at Aldborough: there a sadness mixes with all I see or hear; not a man is living whom I knew in my early portion of life; my contemporaries are gone, and their successors are unknown to me and I to them. Yet, in my last visit, my niece and I passed an old man, and she said, 'There is one you should know; you played together as boys, and he looks as if he wanted to tell you so.' Of course, I stopped on my way, and Zekiel Thorpe and I became once more acquainted. This is sadly tedious to you; but you need not be told that old men love to dwell upon their Recollections and that, I suppose, is one reason for the many volumes published under that name.—Recollections of gentlemen who tell us what they please, and amuse us, in their old age, with the follies of their youth!

"I beg to be remembered to and by Mrs. Crowfoot, Sen., my —— what shall I call the relationship? We are the father and mother of our son and daughter, but in what legal affinity I cannot determine; but I hope we may discuss that question, if it be necessary, at Trowbridge. And now, finally—in which way we close our sermons—once more accept my thanks, and those of my son and daughter. We have this day dined magnificently on your turkey, and drank our wine with remembrances to our friends in Suffolk? We are all—if I except my too frequently recurring pain—in good health; and—the indisposition of Mrs. George Crabbe excepted—so are the Gloucestershire part of my family: *mine*, I repeat with some pride and with more pleasure. I should much like an hour's conversation, *inter nos*, without participation, without interruption; and I am fully persuaded that you would not reject it."

The following is from a letter dated in the April of the same year—the last of his life :—

"Comparing myself with myself, I have felt the weakening effect of time more within the last six months than I ever experienced before. I do not know that I am weaker than numbers are at my age, but I am sure that there is great difference between me at this time, and *me* (if I may so say) at Hastings last year. I cannot walk, no, not half the distance; and then—(one more complaint, and I have done)—I cannot read, but for a short time at once: and now I would ask myself, What would I do at Pucklechurch? if my feet fail me when I walk, my sight when I read—why, I should be a perpetual incumbrance? You will say, What, then, do you do at Trowbridge? There, you know, I have a number of small and often recurring duties, and I play with my fossils; but still I am always purposing to come to you when I can."

Again in May :—

"I am still weak, and just, as I suppose, like other old declining people, without any particular diseases. But in the latter part of the day I become much renovated. Mr. Waldron and I talked of a London journey last evening, till I began to persuade myself I was capable of the undertaking. A little serious consideration when I left him, and especially this morning's feelings, put to flight all such young man's fancies."

Towards the close of this year he again visited his friends, his kind and attached friends, of Hampstead, at their residence at Clifton; and this visit occurring at the memorable time of the Bristol riots, I will subjoin some extracts from his letters from thence—the last we ever received.

"Clifton, October 24.—Assure our dear Caroline,[4] that I feel pleasure in the thought of sitting in any room she assigns me; there to employ myself in my own way, without being troubled or interrupted by any one's business, as at Trowbridge, even by my own. You can scarcely believe how the love and enjoyment of quiet grows upon me. One of my great indulgences is to feel myself alone, but to know, and perhaps hear, that a whole family, little ones and great, are within a few paces of me, and that I can see them when I please—this is a grandpapa's luxury, Miss Caroline!

"I have to thank my friends for one of the most beautiful as well as comfortable rooms you could desire. I look from my window upon the Avon and its wooded and rocky bounds—the trees yet green. A vessel is sailing down, and here comes a steamer (Irish, I suppose). I have in view the end of the Cliff to the right, and on my left a wide and varied prospect over Bristol, as far as the eye can reach, and at present the novelty makes it very interesting. Clifton was always a favourite place with me. I have more strength and more spirits since my arrival at this place, and do not despair of giving a good account of my excursion on my return.

"I believe there is a fund of good sense as well

[4] His daughter-in-law.

as moral feeling in the people of this country; and if ministers proceed steadily, give up some points, and be firm in essentials, there will be a union of sentiment on this great subject of reform by and by; at least, the good and well-meaning will drop their minor differences and be united.

"So you have been reading my almost forgotten stories—Lady Barbara and Ellen! I protest to you their origin is lost to me, and I must read them myself before I can apply your remarks. But I am glad you have mentioned the subject, because I have to observe that there are, in my recess at home, where they have been long undisturbed, another series of such stories,—in number and quantity sufficient for an octavo volume; and as I suppose they are much like the former in execution, and sufficiently different in events and characters, they may hereafter, in peaceable times, be worth something to you; and the more, because I shall, whatever is mortal of me, be at rest in the chancel of Trowbridge church; for the works of authors departed are generally received with some favour, partly as they are old acquaintances, and in part because there can be no more of them."

This letter was our first intimation that my father had any more poems quite prepared for the press;—little did we at that moment dream that we should never have an opportunity of telling him, that since we knew of their existence, he might as well indulge us with the pleasure of hearing them read by himself. On the 26th of the same October he thus wrote to me:—

"I have been with Mrs. Hoare at Bristol, where all appears still: should any thing arise to alarm, you may rely upon our care to avoid danger. Sir Charles Wetherell, to be sure, is not popular, nor is the Bishop, but I trust that both will be safe from violence—abuse they will not mind. The Bishop seems a good-humoured man, and, except by the populace, is greatly admired.—I am sorry to part with my friends, whom I cannot reasonably expect to meet often,—or, more reasonably yet, whom I ought to look upon as here taking our final leave; but, happily, our ignorance of our time is in this our comfort,—that let friends part at any period of their lives, hope will whisper, 'We shall meet again.'"

Happily, he knew not that this *was* their last meeting. In his next letter he speaks of the memorable riots of Bristol—the most alarming of the sort since those recorded in his own London diary, of 1780—and which he had evidently anticipated.

"Bristol, I suppose, never, in the most turbulent times of old, witnessed such outrage. Queen's Square is but half standing; half is a smoking ruin. As you may be apprehensive for my safety, it is right to let you know that my friends and I are undisturbed, except by our fears for the progress of this mob-government, which is already somewhat broken into parties, who wander stupidly about, or sleep wherever they fall wearied with their work and their indulgence. The military are now in considerable force, and many men are sworn in as constables: many volunteers are met in Clifton churchyard, with white round one arm, to distinguish them; some with guns, and the rest with bludgeons. The Mayor's house has been destroyed,—the Bishop's palace plundered, but whether burnt or not I do not know. This morning, a party of soldiers attacked the crowd in the Square; some lives were lost, and the mob dispersed, whether to meet again is doubtful. It has been a dreadful time, but we may reasonably hope it is now over. People are frightened certainly—and no wonder, for it is evident these poor wretches would plunder to the extent of their power. Attempts were made to burn the cathedral, but failed. Many lives were lost. To attempt any other subject now would be fruitless. We can think, speak, and write only of our fears, hopes, or troubles. I would have gone to Bristol to-day, but Mrs. Hoare was unwilling that I should. She thought, and perhaps rightly, that clergymen were marked objects. I therefore only went about half way, and of course could learn but little. All now is quiet and well."

Leaving his most valued friends in the beginning of November, my father came to Pucklechurch, so improved in health and strength, that his description of himself would have been deemed the effect of mere *ennui*, except by those who know the variableness of age—the temporary strength,—the permanent weakness. He preached at both my churches the following Sunday, in a voice so firm and loud, and in a manner so impressive, that I was congratulated on the power he manifested at that advanced stage of life, and was much comforted with the indications of a long protracted decline. I said, "Why, Sir, I will venture a good sum that you will be assisting me ten years hence."—"Ten weeks," was his answer—and that was almost literally the period when he ceased to assist any one. He left us after a fortnight, and returned to Trowbridge. On the 7th of January he wrote,—

"I do not like drowsiness—mine is an old man's natural infirmity, and that same old man creeps upon me more and more. I cannot walk him away: he gets old on the memory, and my poor little accounts never come right. Let me nevertheless be thankful: I have very little pain. 'T is true, from a stiffness in my mouth, I read prayers before we take our breakfast with some difficulty; but that being over, I feel very little incommoded for the rest of the day. We are all in health, for I will not call my lassitude and stupidity by the name of illness. Like Lear, I am a poor old man and foolish, but happily I have no daughter who vexes me."

In the course of this month, I paid him a visit, and stayed with him three or four days; and if I had been satisfied with the indications of his improved health when at Pucklechurch, I was most agreeably surprised to find him still stronger and in better spirits than I had wit-

nessed for the last three years. He had become perceptibly stouter in that short interval: he took his meals with a keen appetite, and walked in a more upright position; and there were no counter-tokens to excite our suspicions. It is true, he observed that he did not like the increase of flesh; but this was said in that light cheerful manner, which imported no serious fears. On the 29th, I received a letter from my brother, stating that he had caught a sharp cold, accompanied with oppression in the chest and pain in the forehead, for which he had been bled. He added, that my father felt relieved, and that he would write again immediately; but on the following morning, while I was expecting an account of his amendment, a chaise drove to the door, which my brother had sent me to save time. In fact, all hope of recovery was already over.

I had once before seen him, as I have already described, under nearly similar circumstances, when, if he was not in extreme danger, he evidently thought he was. He had then said, "Unless some great change takes place, I cannot recover," and had ordered my mother's grave to be kept open to receive him. I asked myself, Will he bear the shock now as firmly as he did then? I feared he would not; because he must be aware that such a change as had then ensued was next to impossible under the present disorder at the age of seventy-seven; and because, whenever he had parted with any of us for the last four or five years, he had been much affected, evidently from the thought that it might be the last meeting. I greatly feared, therefore, that his spirits would be woefully depressed—that the love of life might remain in all its force, and that the dread of death might be strong and distressing. I now state with feelings of indescribable thankfulness, that I had been foreboding a weight of evil that was not; and that we had only to lament his *bodily* sufferings and our incalculable loss.

During the days that preceded his departure, we had not one painful feeling arising from the state of his *mind*. That was more firm than I ever remembered under any circumstances. He knew there was no chance of his recovery, and yet he talked at intervals of his death, and of certain consequent arrangements, with a strong complacent voice; and bade us all adieu without the least faltering of the tongue or moisture of the eye. The awfulness of death, apprehended by his capacious mind, must have had a tendency to absord other feelings; yet was he calm and unappalled;—and intervals of oblivion, under the appearance of sleep, softened his sufferings and administered an opiate to his faculties. One of his characteristics,—exuberance of thought, seemed sometimes, even when pleased, as if it oppressed him; and in this last illness, when he was awake, his mind worked with astonishing rapidity. It was not delirium; for on our recalling his attention to present objects, he would speak with perfect rationality; but, when uninterrupted, the greater portion of his waking hours were passed in rapid soliloquies on a variety of subjects, the chain of which, from his imperfect utterance (when he did not exert himself), we were unable to follow. We seldom interrupted the course that nature was taking, or brought him to the effort of connected discourse, except to learn how we could assist or relieve him. But as in no instance (except in a final lapse of memory) did we discover the least irrationality—so there was no despondency; on the contrary, the cheerful expressions which he had been accustomed to use, were heard from time to time; nay, even that elevation of the inner side of the eyebrows, which occasionally accompanied some humorous observation in the days of his health, occurred once or twice after every hope of life was over. But, if we were thankful for his firmness of mind, we had to lament the strength of his constitution. I was not aware how powerful it was till tried by this disease. I said, "It is your great strength which causes this suffering." He replied, "But it is a great price to pay for it."

On one essential subject it would be wrong to be silent. I have stated, that the most important of all considerations had had an *increasing* influence over him mind. The growth had been ripening with his age, and was especially perceptible in his later years. With regard to the ordinances of religion, he was always manifestly pained if, when absent from home on a Sunday, he had been induced to neglect either the morning or evening services: in his private devotions, as his household can testify, he was most exemplary and earnest up to the period of his attack; yet at that time, when fear often causes the first real prayer to be uttered, *then* did he, as it were, confine himself to the inward workings of his pious and resigned spirit, occasionally, however, betrayed by aspirations most applicable to his circumstances. Among the intelligible fragments that can never be forgotten, were frequent exclamations of, "My time is short; it is well to be prepared for death." "Lucy,"—this was the affectionate servant that attended along with his sons,—"dear Lucy, be earnest in prayer! May you see your children's children." From time to time he expressed great fear that we were all over-exerting ourselves in sitting up at night with him; but the last night he said, "Have patience with me—it will soon be over.—Stay with me, Lucy, till I am dead, and then let others take care of me." This night was most distressing. The changes of posture sometimes necessary, gave him extreme pain, and he said, "This is shocking." Then again he became exhausted, or his mind wandered in a troubled sleep. Awaking a little refreshed,

he held out his hand to us, saying—as if he felt it might be the last opportunity, "God bless you—be good, and come to me!" Even then, though we were all overpowered, and lost all self-command, he continued firm. His countenance now began to vary and alter. Once, however, we had the satisfaction of seeing it lighted up with an indescribable expression of joy, as he appeared to be looking at something before him, and uttered these words, "That blessed book!"

After another considerable interval of apparent insensibility, he awoke, and said, in a tone so melancholy, that it rang in my ears for weeks after, "I thought it had been all over," with such an emphasis on the *all!* Afterwards he said, "I cannot see you now." When I said, "We shall soon follow;" he answered, "Yes, yes!" I mentioned his exemplary fortitude; but he appeared unwilling to have any good ascribed to himself.

When the incessant presents and enquiries of his friends in the town were mentioned, he said, "What a trouble I am to them all!" And in the course of the night, these most consolatory words were distinctly heard, "All is well at last!" Soon after, he said, imperfectly, "You must make an entertainment;" meaning for his kind Trowbridge friends after his departure. These were the last intelligible words I heard. Lucy, who could scarcely be persuaded to leave him, day or night, and was close by him when he died, says that the last words he uttered were, "God bless you—God bless you!"

About one o'clock he became apparently torpid; and I left him with my brother, requesting to be called instantly, in case of the least returning sensibility,—but it never returned. As my brother was watching his countenance at seven o'clock in the morning, a rattling in the throat was heard once, and twice, but the third or fourth time all was over.

The shutters of the shops in the town were half closed, as soon as his death was known. On the day of his funeral, ninety-two of the principal inhabitants, including all the dissenting ministers, assembling of their own accord in the school-room, followed him to the grave. The shops on this day were again closed; the streets crowded; the three galleries and the organ-loft were hung with black cloth, as well as the pulpit and chancel. The choir was in mourning—the other inhabitants of the town were in their seats and in mourning—the church was full—the effect appalling. The terrible solemnity seems yet recent while I write. The leader of the choir selected the following beautiful anthem:—

"When the ear heard him, then it blessed him;
And when the eye saw him, it gave witness of him.
He delivered the poor that cried, the fatherless, and him that had none to help him:
Kindness and meekness and comfort were in his tongue."

The worthy master of the Free and Sunday school at Trowbridge, Mr. Nightingale, on the Sunday after his funeral, delivered an impressive address to the numerous children under his care, on the death of their aged and affectionate minister. It was printed, and contains the following passage: "'Poor Mr. Crabbe,' said a little girl, the other day, very simply, '*poor Mr. Crabbe will never go up in pulpit any more with his white head.*' No! my children, that hoary head—found, as may yours and mine be found!—in the ways of righteousness and peace, is gone to rest; but his memory is embalmed in the house of our God. Sacred is the honoured dust that sleeps beside yonder altar. Is there one of you who has not experienced his kindness?—who has not seen his eyes beam with pleasure to hear you repeat 'Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done?' Religiously keep the Bibles he gave you; and when you read these words of your Saviour—'I go to prepare a place for you—and when I come, I will receive you to myself'—think of your affectionate minister, and that these were his dying words—'Be good and come to me.'"

Soon after his funeral, some of the principal parishioners met, in order to form a committee, to erect a monument over his grave in the chancel: and when his family begged to contribute to the generous undertaking, it was not permitted. "They desired," it was observed by their respected chairman,[5] "to testify their regard to him as a friend and a minister." And, I trust, his children's children will be taught to honour those who, by their deep sense of his worth, have given so strong a token of their own worthiness.

The subscriptions to his monument being sufficiently large to sanction the commission of the work to the hands of Mr. Baillie, he finished it in July, and it was placed in the church, August, 1833. The eminent artist himself generously contributed the marble.

A figure admirably represents the dying poet casting his eyes on the sacred volume; two celestial beings are looking on, as if awaiting his departure: on the opposite page is the short and beautiful inscription, judiciously expressed in his own native tongue.

It is the custom to close a biographical work with a summary of character. I must leave the reader of these pages to supply this for himself. I conclude with simply transcribing a few verses—ascribed to an eminent pen,[6]—which appeared in print shortly after my dear and venerated father's departure:—

"Farewell, dear CRABBE! thou meekest of mankind,
With heart all fervour, and all strength of mind.

[5] Mr. Waldron, his young friend and adviser, now like himself numbered with the departed. He died, universally beloved and lamented, April, 1833, a year and two months after my father.

[6] John Duncan, Esq., of New College, Oxford.

With tenderest sympathy for others' woes,
Fearless, all guile and malice to expose:
Steadfast of purpose in pursuit of right,
To drag forth dark hypocrisy to light,
To brand th' oppressor, and to shame the proud,
To shield the righteous from the slanderous crowd;
To error lenient and to frailty mild,
Repentance ever was thy welcome child:
In every state, as husband, parent, friend,
Scholar, or bard, thou couldst the Christian blend.

Thy verse from Nature's face each feature drew,
Each lovely charm, each mole and wrinkle too.
No dreamy incidents of wild romance,
With whirling shadows, wilder'd minds entrance;
But plain realities the mind engage,
With pictured warnings through each polished page.
Hogarth of Song! be this thy perfect praise:—
Truth prompted, and Truth purified thy lays;
The God of Truth has given thy verse and thee
Truth's holy palm—His Immortality."

SACRED TO THE MEMORY

OF

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE, LL.B.,

WHO DIED FEBRUARY THE THIRD, 1832,
IN THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF HIS AGE, AND THE
NINETEENTH OF HIS SERVICES AS RECTOR
OF THIS PARISH.

BORN IN HUMBLE LIFE, HE MADE HIMSELF WHAT HE WAS.
BY THE FORCE OF HIS GENIUS,
HE BROKE THROUGH THE OBSCURITY OF HIS BIRTH
YET NEVER CEASED TO FEEL FOR THE
LESS FORTUNATE;

ENTERING (AS HIS WORKS CAN TESTIFY) INTO
THE SORROWS AND DEPRIVATIONS
OF THE POOREST OF HIS PARISHIONERS;
AND SO DISCHARGING THE DUTIES OF HIS STATION AS
A MINISTER AND A MAGISTRATE,
AS TO ACQUIRE THE RESPECT AND ESTEEM
OF ALL HIS NEIGHBOURS.

AS A WRITER, HE IS WELL DESCRIBED BY A GREAT
CONTEMPORARY AS
"NATURE'S STERNEST PAINTER, YET HER BEST."

THE END OF THE LIFE.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF THE

REV. GEORGE CRABBE.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE POEMS

THE Poetical Works open with the Dedication prefixed to that collection of Poems, by Mr. Crabbe, which appeared in 1807; and which included "The Library," originally published in 1781; "The Village," in 1783; and "The Newspaper," in 1785;—together with four then new poems; viz., "The Parish Register," "The Birth of Flattery," "Sir Eustace Grey," and "The Hall of Justice." The Author's Preface to the same collection, of 1807, is next given; and then follow the Poems which it embraced; now for the first time arranged in the order in which they were written.

The original draft of "The Library," as first shown to Mr. Burke, has been found among Mr. Crabbe's MSS., and the various readings supplied from this and other sources, together with explanatory matter of different kinds, are appended to the present pages in notes distinguished by brackets.

In imitation of the example given by Sir Walter Scott, in the collective edition of his Poetical Works, an Appendix is added to this volume, containing various juvenile Poems by Mr. Crabbe, some from his MSS., others from two anonymous publications which have now become extremely scarce. These early essays cannot detract from the fame of his maturer productions; and illustrating, as they do, in a striking manner, the progress of the Author's taste and talents, they may furnish both encouragement and warning to the young aspirant in the art of poetry. They are, however, chiefly valuable for the light which they throw on the personal character of the author himself; the purification of his heart from youthful errors under the influence of virtuous love, and an awakened sense of religious obligation; and the struggles of his mind during the period of what, like Dr. Johnson, he calls "*his distress.*"

Between the close of "The Borough," and the commencement of the "Tales," the Editor has been induced to insert a few Occasional Pieces, never before printed, which have been recently found among Mr. Crabbe's note-books, or supplied by the kind attention of his friends—and one poem of greater importance, composed in the same measure with "Sir Eustace Grey," and entitled "*The World of Dreams.*" This performance, though it may not, perhaps, have received the last polish which the Author could have given it, appears to the Editor so characteristic of his highest genius, that it could not be omitted without injustice to his memory.

POEMS.

Ipse per Ausonias Æneia carmina gentes
Qui sonat, ingenti qui nomine pulsat Olympum;
Mæoniumque senem Romano provocat ore:
Forsitan illius nemoris latuisset in umbrâ
Quòd canit, et sterili tantum cantâsset avenâ
Ignotus populi; si Mæcenate careret.

LUCAN. *Paneg. ad Pisones.*

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY-RICHARD FOX,

LORD HOLLAND,

OF HOLLAND IN LINCOLNSHIRE; LORD HOLLAND, OF FOXLEY; AND FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

MY LORD,

THAT the longest poem in this collection[1] was honoured by the notice of your Lordship's right honourable and ever-valued relation, Mr. Fox; that it should be the last which engaged his attention; and that some parts of it were marked with his approbation; are circumstances productive of better hopes of ultimate success than I had dared to entertain before I was gratified with a knowledge of them: and the hope thus raised leads me to ask permission that I may dedicate this book to your Lordship, to whom that truly great and greatly lamented personage was so nearly allied in family, so closely bound in affection, and in whose mind presides the same critical taste which he exerted to the delight of all who heard him. He doubtless united with his unequalled abilities a fund of good-nature; and this possibly led him to speak favourably of, and give satisfaction to, writers with whose productions he might not be entirely satisfied: nor must I allow myself to suppose his desire of obliging was withholden, when he honoured any effort of mine with his approbation: but, my Lord, as there was discrimination in the opinion he gave; as he did not veil indifference for insipid mediocrity of composition under any general expression of cool approval: I allow myself to draw a favourable conclusion from the verdict of one who had the superiority of intellect few would dispute, which he made manifest by a force of eloquence peculiar to himself; whose excellent judgment no one of his friends found cause to distrust, and whose acknowledged candour no enemy had the temerity to deny.[2]

[1] ["The Parish Register" was the longest poem in the volume, published in 1807, to which this dedication was prefixed.]

[2] ["Mr. Fox's memory seems never to have been oppressed by the number, or distracted by the variety, of the materials which he had gradually accumulated. Never, indeed, will his companions forget the readiness, correctness, and glowing enthusiasm with which he repeated the noblest passages in the best English, French, and Italian poets, and in the best epic and dramatic writers of antiquity. He read the most celebrated authors of Greece and Rome, not only with exquisite taste, but with philological precision; and the mind which had been employed in balancing the fate of kingdoms, seemed occasionally, like that of Cæsar, when he wrote upon grammatical analogy, to put forth its whole might upon the structure of sentences, the etymology of words, the import of particles, the quantity of syllables, and all the nicer distinctions of those metrical canons, which some of our ingenious countrymen have laid down for the different kinds of verse in the learned languages. Even in these subordinate accomplishments, he was wholly exempt from pedantry. He could amuse without ostentation, while he instructed without arrogance."—PARR.]

With such encouragement, I present my book to your Lordship: the "Account of the Life and Writings of Lope de Vega"[3] has taught me what I am to expect; I there perceive how your Lordship can write, and am there taught how you can judge of writers: my faults, however numerous, I know, will none of them escape through inattention, nor will any merit be lost for want of discernment: my verses are before him who has written elegantly, who has judged with accuracy, and who has given unequivocal proof of abilities in a work of difficulty,—a translation of poetry, which few persons in this kingdom are able to read,[4] and in the estimation of talents not hitherto justly appreciated. In this view, I cannot but feel some apprehension: but I know also, that your Lordship is apprised of the great difficulty of writing well; that you will make much allowance for failures, if not too frequently repeated; and, as you can accurately discern, so you will readily approve, all the better and more happy efforts of one, who places the highest value upon your Lordship's approbation, and who has the honour to be,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's most faithful
and obliged humble servant,
Geo. Crabbe.

Muston, Sept. 1807.

PREFACE TO POEMS PUBLISHED IN 1807.

About twenty-five years since was published a poem called "The Library;" which, in no long time, was followed by two others, "The Village," and "The Newspaper:" these, with a few alterations and additions, are here reprinted; and are accompanied by a poem of greater length, and several shorter attempts, now, for the first time, before the public; whose reception of them creates in their author something more than common solicitude, because he conceives that, with the judgment to be formed of these latter productions, upon whatever may be found intrinsically meritorious or defective, there will be united an inquiry into the relative degree of praise or blame which they may be thought to deserve, when compared with the more early attempts of the same writer.

And certainly, were it the principal employment of a man's life to compose verses, it might seem reasonable to expect that he would continue to improve as long as he continued to live; though, even then, there is some doubt whether such improvement would follow; and, perhaps, proofs might be adduced to show it would not: but when, to this "*idle trade*," is added some "*calling*,"[1] with superior claims upon his time and attention, his progress in the art of versification will probably be in proportion neither to the years he has lived, nor even to the attempts he has made.

While composing the first published of these poems,[2] the author was honoured with the notice and assisted by the advice of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke: part of it was written in his presence, and the whole submitted to his judgment; receiving, in its progress, the benefit of his correction: I hope, therefore, to obtain pardon of the reader, if I eagerly seize the occasion, and, after so long a silence, endeavour to express a grateful sense of the benefits I have received from this gentleman,

[3] [First published in 1806. A new edition appeared in 1817, to which was added "An Account of the Life and Writings of Guillen de Castro." "No name among the Spanish poets," says Mr. Southey, "is so generally known out of its own country as that of Lope de Vega, but it is only the name; and perhaps no author, whose reputation is so widely extended, has been so little read. The good fortune, however, of this 'phœnix of Spain' has not wholly forsaken him; and he has been as happy now in a biographer, as he was during his life in obtaining the patronage of the great and the favour of the public."]

[4] ["For about a hundred years, French had been the only literature which obtained any attention in this country. Now and then some worthless production was 'done into English by a Person of Quality,' and a few sickly dramatists imported stage plots and re-manufactured them for the English market; making of less value, by their bad workmanship, materials which were of little enough value in themselves. But at this time a revival was beginning; it was brought about, not by the appearance of great and original genius, but by awakening the public to the merits of our old writers, and of those of other countries. The former task was effected by Percy and Warton: the latter it was Hayley's fortune to perform. A greater effect was produced upon the rising generation of scholars, by the notes to his Essay on Epic Poetry, than by any other contemporary work, the Relics of Ancient Poetry alone excepted. A most gratifying proof of this was afforded him thirty years after these notes were published, when he received from Lord Holland a present of the 'Life of Lope de Vega,' and a letter saying, that what Hayley had there written concerning the Araucana, had induced him to learn the Spanish language. And this was followed by an act of substantial kindness on his Lordship's part, in procuring an appointment for one of the author's relations. There are many persons who might make the same acknowledgment as Lord Holland, though few who have pursued the study of that fertile literature with such distinguished success."—Southey.]

[1] ["I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd."—Pope.]

[2] ["The Library."]

who was solicitous for my more essential interests, as well as benevolently anxious for my credit as a writer.

I will not enter upon the subject of his extraordinary abilities; it would be vanity, it would be weakness, in me to believe that I could make them better known or more admired than they now are; but of his private worth,[3] of his wishes to do good, of his affability and condescension; his readiness to lend assistance when he knew it was wanted, and his delight to give praise where he thought it was deserved; of these I may write with some propriety. All know that his powers were vast, his acquirements various; and I take leave to add, that he applied them with unremitted attention to those objects which he believed tended to the honour and welfare of his country. But it may not be so generally understood, that he was ever assiduous in the more private duties of a benevolent nature; that he delighted to give encouragement to any promise of ability,[4] and assistance to any appearance of desert:[5] to what purposes he employed his pen, and with what eloquence he spake in the senate, will be told by many, who yet may be ignorant of the solid instruction, as well as the fascinating pleasantry, found in his common conversation,[6] amongst his friends; and his affectionate manners,[7] amiable disposition,[7] and zeal for their happiness, which he manifested in the hours of retirement with his family.

To this gentleman I was indebted for my knowledge of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was as well known to his friends for his perpetual fund of good humour and his unceasing wishes to oblige, as he was to the public for the extraordinary productions of his pencil and his pen.[8] By him I was favoured with an introduction to Dr. Johnson, who honoured me with his notice, and assisted me, as Mr. Boswell has told, with remarks and emendations for a poem I was about to publish.[9] The Doctor had been

[3] [Mrs. Montagu, who had the good fortune to know, and the good taste to admire, Mr. Burke in the very early part of his life, thus speaks of him in one of her letters:—"I shall send you a 'Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful,' by Mr. Burke, a friend of mine. I think you will find him an elegant and ingenious writer. He is far from the pert pedantry and assuming ignorance of modern witlings, but in conversation and in writing an ingenious and ingenuous man, modest and delicate, and on great and serious subjects full of that respect and veneration which a good mind and a great one is sure to feel, while fools rush behind the altar at which wise men kneel and pay mysterious reverence."]

[4] [While in Dublin, in 1763, Burke's attention was called to a friendless young adventurer, who had just arrived from Cork, to exhibit a picture. This was Barry, the celebrated painter. Burke saw him frequently; examined and praised his picture; enquired into his views and future prospects; offered him a passage to England; received him, as he afterwards did Crabbe, at his house in town; introduced him to the principal artists; and procured employment for him to copy pictures under Athenian Stuart, till a change in his own circumstances enabled him to do still more. By his advice Barry went to Italy for improvement in his art, and while there the painter was chiefly supported by his munificence. Barry, like Crabbe, acknowledged the weight of his obligations. "I am your property," he wrote to Burke; "you ought surely to be free with a man of your own making, who has found in you, father, brother, friend, every thing."—See PRIOR'S *Life of Burke*, and CUNNINGHAM'S *British Painters*.]

[5] [Having already brought forward a painter and a poet of celebrity, he endeavoured to do the same by a sculptor. Writing to Lord Charlemont, in 1782, he says,—"I find that Ireland, among other marks of her just gratitude to Mr. Grattan, intends to erect a monument to his honour, which is to be decorated with sculpture. It will be a pleasure to you to know, that, at this time, a young man of Ireland is here, who, I really think, as far as my judgment goes, is fully equal to our best statuaries, both in taste and execution. If you employ him, you will encourage the rising arts in the decoration of the rising virtue of Ireland; and though the former, in the scale of things, is infinitely below the latter, there is a kind of relationship between them. The young man's name who wishes to be employed is Hickey."]

[6] ["Burke," said Johnson, "is never what we call humdrum; never in a hurry to begin conversation, at a loss to carry it on, or eager to leave off. He does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full." The Doctor often delighted to say, "If a man were to go by chance; at the same time with Burke, under a shed to shun a shower, he would say, 'This is an extraordinary man!'"—CROKER'S *Boswell*.]

[7] [The following affecting incident, detailed by Mrs. Burke to a friend, took place a few months before Mr. Burke's death, in 1797:—"A feeble old horse, which had been a great favourite with the junior Mr. Burke, and his constant companion in all rural journeyings and sports when both were alike healthful and vigorous, was now, in his age, and on the death of his master, turned out to take the run of the park for the remainder of his life at ease, with strict injunctions to the servants that he should neither be ridden nor molested by any one. While walking one day in solitary musing, Mr. Burke perceived this worn-out old servant come close up to him, and at length, after some moments spent in viewing him, followed by seeming recollection and confidence, deliberately rested its head upon his bosom. The singularity of the action itself; the remembrance of his dead son, its late master, who occupied much of his thoughts at all times; and the apparent attachment and almost intelligence of the poor brute, as if it could sympathise with his inward sorrows; rushing at once into his mind, totally overpowered his firmness, and throwing his arms over its neck, he wept long and bitterly."]

[8] [This great painter and most amiable gentleman died in 1792. "Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the great masters of the renowned ages. In portrait he went beyond them; for he communicated to that department of the art, in which English artists are the most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity, derived from the higher branches, which even those who professed them in a superior manner, did not always preserve when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention of history, and of the amenity of landscape. In painting portraits, he appears not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. His paintings illustrate his lessons, and his lessons seem to have been derived from his paintings. He possessed the theory as perfectly as the practice of his art.... In full happiness of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art, and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinising eye in any part of his conduct or discourse..... His talents of every kind—powerful from nature, and not meanly cultivated by letters—his social virtues in all the relations and in all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of agreeable societies, which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to provoke some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow. Hail! and farewell!"—BURKE.]

[9] [See *antè*, p. 33; and Croker's Boswell, vol. v. p. 55.]

often wearied by applications, and did not readily comply with requests for his opinion; not from any unwillingness to oblige, but from a painful contention in his mind, between a desire of giving pleasure and a determination to speak truth. No man can, I think, publish a work without some expectation of satisfying those who are to judge of its merit: but I can, with the utmost regard to veracity, speak my fears, as predominating over every pre-indulged thought of a more favourable nature, when I was told that a judge so discerning had consented to read and give his opinion of "The Village," the poem I had prepared for publication. The time of suspense was not long protracted; I was soon favoured with a few words from Sir Joshua, who observed,—"If I knew how cautious Dr. Johnson was in giving commendation, I should be well satisfied with the portion dealt to me in his letter." Of that letter the following is a copy:—

"March 4, 1783.

"Sir,

"I have sent you back Mr. Crabbe's poem; which I read with great delight. It is original, vigorous, and elegant. The alterations which I have made, I do not require him to adopt; for my lines are, perhaps, not often better [than] his own: but he may take mine and his own together, and perhaps, between them, produce something better than either. —He is not to think his copy wantonly defaced: a wet sponge will wash all the red lines away, and leave the pages clean. His Dedication[10] will be least liked: it were better to contract it into a short sprightly address.—I do not doubt of Mr. Crabbe's success. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

That I was fully satisfied, my readers will do me the justice to believe; and I hope they will pardon me, if there should appear to them any impropriety in publishing the favourable opinion expressed in a private letter: they will judge, and truly, that by so doing, I wish to bespeak their good opinion, but have no design of extorting their applause. I would not hazard an appearance so ostentatious to gratify my vanity, but I venture to do it in compliance with my fears.

After these was published "The Newspaper:" it had not the advantage of such previous criticism from any friends, nor perhaps so much of my own attention as I ought to have given to it; but the impression was disposed of, and I will not pay so little respect to the judgment of my readers as now to suppress what they then approved.

Since the publication of this poem, more than twenty years have elapsed; and I am not without apprehension, lest so long a silence should be construed into a blamable neglect of my own interest, which those excellent friends were desirous of promoting; or, what is yet worse, into a want of gratitude for their assistance; since it becomes me to suppose they considered these first attempts as promises of better things, and their favours as stimulants to future exertion. And here, be the construction put upon my apparent negligence what it *may*, let me not suppress my testimony to the liberality of those who are looked up to as patrons and encouragers of literary merit, or, indeed, of merit of any kind: their patronage has never been refused, I conceive, when it has been reasonably expected or modestly required; and it would be difficult, probably, to instance, in these times and in this country, any one who merited or was supposed to merit assistance, but who nevertheless languished in obscurity or necessity for want of it; unless in those cases where it was prevented by the resolution of impatient pride, or wearied by the solicitations of determined profligacy. And, while the subject is before me, I am unwilling to pass silently over the debt of gratitude which I owe to the memory of two deceased noblemen,—His Grace the late Duke of Rutland, and the Right Honourable the Lord Thurlow: sensible of the honour done me by their notice, and the benefits received from them, I trust this acknowledgment will be imputed to its only motive—a grateful sense of their favours.

Upon this subject I could dwell with much pleasure; but, to give a reason for that appearance of neglect, as it is more difficult, so, happily, it is less required. In truth, I have, for many years, intended a republication of these poems, as soon as I should be able to join with them such other of later date as might not deprive me of the little credit the former had obtained. Long, indeed, has this purpose been procrastinated: and if the duties of a profession, not before pressing upon me—if the claims of a situation, at that time untried—if diffidence of my own judgment, and the loss of my earliest friends,—will not sufficiently account for my delay, I must rely upon the good-nature of my reader, that he will let them avail as far as he can, and find an additional apology in my fears of his censure.

These fears being so prevalent with me, I determined not to publish any thing more, unless I could first obtain the sanction of such an opinion as I might with some confidence rely upon. I looked for a friend who, having the discerning taste of Mr. Burke, and the critical sagacity of Doctor Johnson, would bestow upon my MS. the attention requisite to form his opinion, and would then favour me with the result of his observations; and it was my singular good fortune to gain such assistance; the opinion of a critic so qualified, and a friend so disposed to favour me. I had been honoured by an introduction to the Right Honourable Charles James Fox some years before, at the seat of Mr. Burke; and being again with him, I received a promise that he would peruse any work I might send to him previous to its publication, and would give me his opinion. At that time, I did not think myself sufficiently prepared; and when, afterwards, I had collected some poems for his inspection, I found my right honourable friend engaged by the affairs of a

[10] Neither of these were adopted. The author had written, about that time, some verses to the memory of Lord Robert Manners, brother to the late Duke of Rutland; and these, by a junction, it is presumed, not forced or unnatural, form the concluding part of "The Village."

great empire, and struggling with the inveteracy of a fatal disease: at such time, upon such mind, ever disposed to oblige as that mind was, I could not obtrude the petty business of criticising verses; but he remembered the promise he had kindly given, and repeated an offer, which though I had not presumed to expect, I was happy to receive. A copy of the poems, now first published, was immediately sent to him, and (as I have the information from Lord Holland, and his Lordship's permission to inform my readers) the poem which I have named "The Parish Register" was heard by Mr. Fox, and it excited interest enough, by some of its parts, to gain for me the benefit of his judgment upon the whole. Whatever he approved, the reader will readily believe, I have carefully retained; the parts he disliked are totally expunged, and others are substituted, which I hope resemble those more conformable to the taste of so admirable a judge. Nor can I deny myself the melancholy satisfaction of adding, that this poem (and more especially the history of Phœbe Dawson, with some parts of the second book), were the last compositions of their kind that engaged and amused the capacious, the candid, the benevolent mind of this great man.

The above information I owe to the favour of the Right Honourable Lord Holland; nor this only, but to his Lordship I am indebted for some excellent remarks upon the other parts of my MS. It was not, indeed, my good fortune then to know that my verses were in the hands of a nobleman who had given proof of his accurate judgment as a critic, and his elegance as a writer, by favouring the public with an easy and spirited translation of some interesting scenes of a dramatic poet not often read in this kingdom. The Life of Lope de Vega was then unknown to me: I had, in common with many English readers, heard of him; but could not judge whether his far-extended reputation was caused by the sublime efforts of a mighty genius, or the unequalled facility of a rapid composer, aided by peculiar and fortunate circumstances. That any part of my MS. was honoured by the remarks of Lord Holland yields me a high degree of satisfaction, and his Lordship will perceive the use I have made of them; but I must feel some regret when I know to what small portion they were limited; and discerning, as I do, the taste and judgment bestowed upon the verses of Lope de Vega, I must perceive how much my own needed the assistance afforded to one who cannot be sensible of the benefit he has received.

But how much soever I may lament the advantages lost, let me remember with gratitude the helps I have obtained. With a single exception, every poem in the ensuing collection has been submitted to the critical sagacity of a gentleman upon whose skill and candour their author could rely. To publish by advice of friends has been severely ridiculed, and that too by a poet who probably, without such advice, never made public any verses of his own: in fact it may not be easily determined who acts with less discretion,—the writer who is encouraged to publish his works merely by the advice of friends whom he consulted, or he who, against advice, publishes from the sole encouragement of his own opinion. These are deceptions to be carefully avoided; and I was happy to escape the latter by the friendly attentions of the Reverend Richard Turner, minister of Great Yarmouth. To this gentleman I am indebted more than I am able to describe, or than he is willing to allow, for the time he has bestowed upon the attempts I have made. He is, indeed, the kind of critic for whom every poet should devoutly wish, and the friend whom every man would be happy to acquire; he has taste to discern all that is meritorious, and sagacity to detect whatsoever should be discarded; he gives just the opinion an author's wisdom should covet, however his vanity might prompt him to reject it; what altogether to expunge and what to improve he has repeatedly taught me, and, could I have obeyed him in the latter direction, as I invariably have in the former, the public would have found this collection more worthy its attention, and I should have sought the opinion of the critic more void of apprehension.

But, whatever I may hope or fear, whatever assistance I have had or have needed, it becomes me to leave my verses to the judgment of the reader, without my endeavour to point out their merit, or an apology for their defects: yet as, among the poetical attempts of one who has been for many years a priest, it may seem a want of respect for the legitimate objects of his study, that nothing occurs, unless it be incidentally, of the great subjects of religion; so it may appear a kind of ingratitude of a beneficed clergyman, that he has not employed his talent (be it estimated as it may) to some patriotic purpose; as in celebrating the unsubdued spirit of his countrymen in their glorious resistance of those enemies who would have no peace throughout the world, except that which is dictated to the drooping spirit of suffering humanity by the triumphant insolence of military success.

Credit will be given to me, I hope, when I affirm, that subjects so interesting have the due weight with me, which the sacred nature of the one, and the national importance of the other, must impress upon every mind not seduced into carelessness for religion by the lethargic influence of a perverted philosophy, nor into indifference for the cause of our country by hyperbolical or hypocritical professions of universal philanthropy; but, after many efforts to satisfy myself, by various trials on these subjects, I declined all further attempt, from a conviction that I should not be able to give satisfaction to my readers. Poetry of a religious nature must, indeed, ever be clogged with almost insuperable difficulty; but there are, doubtless, to be found poets who are well qualified to celebrate the unanimous and heroic spirit of our countrymen, and to describe in appropriate colours some of those extraordinary scenes which have been and are shifting in the face of Europe with such dreadful celerity; and to such I relinquish the duty.

It remains for me to give the reader a brief view of those articles in the following collection, which for the first time solicit his attention.

In the "Parish Register" he will find an endea-

vour once more to describe village manners, not by adopting the notion of pastoral simplicity, or assuming ideas of rustic barbarity, but by more natural views of the peasantry, considered as a mixed body of persons, sober or profligate, and hence, in a great measure, contented or miserable. To this more general description are added the various characters which occur in the three parts of a Register—Baptism, Marriages, and Burials.

If the "Birth of Flattery" offer no moral, as an appendage to the fable, it is hoped that nothing of an immoral, nothing of improper tendency, will be imputed to a piece of poetical playfulness; in fact, genuine praise, like all other species of truth, is known by its bearing full investigation: it is what the giver is happy that he can justly bestow, and the receiver conscious that he may boldly accept; but adulation must ever be afraid of inquiry, and must, in proportion to their degrees of moral sensibility,

Be shame "to him that gives and him that takes."

The verses, "*When all the youthful passions cease*," &c., want a title; nor does the motto, although it gave occasion to them, altogether express the sense of the writer, who meant to observe, that some of our best acquisitions, and some of our nobler conquests, are rendered ineffectual by the passing away of opportunity, and the changes made by time; an argument that such acquirements and moral habits are reserved for a state of being in which they have the uses here denied them.

In the story of "Sir Eustace Grey," an attempt is made to describe the wanderings of a mind first irritated by the consequences of error and misfortune, and afterwards soothed by a species of enthusiastic conversion, still keeping him insane—a task very difficult; and, if the presumption of the attempt may find pardon, it will not be refused to the failure of the poet. It is said of our Shakspeare, respecting madness,—

"In that circle none dare walk but he:"—

yet be it granted to one, who dares not to pass the boundary fixed for common minds, at least to step near to the tremendous verge, and form some idea of the terrors that are stalking in the interdicted space.

When first I had written "Aaron, or The Gipsy," I had no unfavourable opinion of it; and had I been collecting my verses at that time for publication, I should certainly have included this tale. Nine years have since elapsed, and I continue to judge the same of it; thus literally obeying one of the directions given by the prudence of criticism to the eagerness of the poet: but how far I may have conformed to rules of more importance must be left to the less partial judgment of the reader.

The concluding poem, entitled "Woman!" was written at the time when the quotation from Mr. Ledyard was first made public: the expression has since become hackneyed; but the sentiment is congenial with our feelings, and, though somewhat amplified in these verses, it is hoped they are not so far extended as to become tedious.

After this brief account of his subjects, the author leaves them to their fate, not presuming to make any remarks upon the kinds of versification he has chosen, or the merit of the execution: he has, indeed, brought forward the favourable opinion of his friends, and for that he earnestly hopes his motives will be rightly understood; it was a step of which he felt the advantage, while he foresaw the danger: he was aware of the benefit, if his readers would consider him as one who puts on a defensive armour against hasty and determined severity; but he feels also the hazard, lest they should suppose he looks upon himself to be guarded by his friends, and so secure in the defence, that he may defy the fair judgment of legal criticism. It will probably be said, "he has brought with him his testimonials to the bar of the public;" and he must admit the truth of the remark; but he begs leave to observe in reply, that, of those who bear testimonials of any kind, the greater number feel apprehension, and not security; they are, indeed, so far from the enjoyment of victory, of the exultation of triumph, that, with all they can do for themselves, with all their friends have done for them, they are, like him, in dread of examination, and in fear of disappointment.

Muston, Leicestershire,
September, 1807.

THE LIBRARY.[1]

Books afford Consolation to the troubled Mind, by substituting a lighter Kind of Distress for its own—They are productive of other Advantages—An Author's Hope of being known in distant Times—Arrangement of the Library—Size and Form of the Volumes—The ancient Folio, clasped and chained—Fashion prevalent even in this Place—The Mode of publishing in Numbers, Pamphlets, &c.—Subjects of the different Classes——Divinity—Controversy—The Friends of Religion often more dangerous than her Foes—Sceptical Authors—Reason too much rejected by the former Converts; exclusively relied upon by the latter—Philosophy ascending through the Scale of Being to moral Subjects—Books of Medicine; their Variety, Variance, and Proneness to System: the Evil of this, and the Difficulty it causes—Farewell to this Study—Law: the increasing Number of its Volumes—Supposed happy State of Man without Laws—Progress of Society—Historians: their Subjects—Dramatic Authors, Tragic and Comic—Ancient Romances—The Captive Heroine—Happiness in the Perusal of such Books: why—Criticism—Apprehensions of the Author: removed by the Appearance of the Genius of the Place; whose Reasoning and Admonition conclude the Subject.

WHEN the sad soul, by care and grief oppress'd,
Looks round the world, but looks in vain for rest;
When every object that appears in view,
Partakes her gloom and seems dejected too;
Where shall affliction from itself retire?[2]
Where fade away and placidly expire?

Alas! we fly to silent scenes in vain;
Care blasts the honours of the flow'ry plain:
Care veils in clouds the sun's meridian beam,
Sighs through the grove, and murmurs in the stream;
For when the soul is labouring in despair,
In vain the body breathes a purer air:
No storm-tost sailor sighs for slumbering seas,—
He dreads the tempest, but invokes the breeze;
On the smooth mirror of the deep resides
Reflected woe, and o'er unruffled tides
The ghost of every former danger glides.
Thus, in the calms of life, we only see
A steadier image of our misery;
But lively gales and gently clouded skies
Disperse the sad reflections as they rise;
And busy thoughts and little cares avail
To ease the mind, when rest and reason fail.
When the dull thought, by no designs employ'd,
Dwells on the past, or suffer'd or enjoy'd,
We bleed anew in every former grief,
And joys departed furnish no relief.
Not Hope herself, with all her flattering art,
Can cure this stubborn sickness of the heart:
The soul disdains each comfort she prepares,
And anxious searches for congenial cares;
Those lenient cares, which with our own combined,
By mix'd sensations ease th' afflicted mind,
And steal our grief away, and leave their own behind;

[1] [For Mr. Crabbe's own account of the preparation of this poem for the press, under Mr. Burke's eye, at Beaconsfield, see *antè*, p. 27. "The Library" appeared anonymously, in June, 1781; but the author's name and designation as domestic chaplain to the Duke of Rutland were on the title-page of a second edition published in 1783.]

[2] [After line fourth, the original MS. reads as follows:—

Where can the wretched lose their cares, and hide
The tears of sorrow from the eyes of pride?
Can they in silent shades a refuge find
From all the scorn and malice of mankind?
From wit's disdain, and wealth's provoking sneer,
From folly's grin, and humour's stupid leer,
And clamour's iron tongue, censorious and severe?
There can they see the scenes of nature gay,
And shake the gloomy dreams of life away?
Without a sigh, the hope of youth give o'er,
And with aspiring honour climb no more.
Alas! we fly to peaceful shades in vain;
Peace dwells within, or all without is pain:
No storm-tost sailor sighs for slumbering seas—
He dreads a tempest, but desires a breeze.
The placid waves with silent swell disclose
A clearer view, and but reflect his woes.
So life has calms, in which we only see
A fuller prospect of our misery.

When the sick heart, by no design employ'd,
Throbs o'er the past, or suffer'd, or enjoy'd,
In former pleasures finding no relief,
And pain'd anew in every former grief,
Can friends console us when our cares distress,
Smile on our woes, and make misfortunes less?
Alas! like winter'd leaves, they fall away,
Or more disgrace our prospects by delay;
The genial warmth, the fostering sap is past,
That kept them faithful, and that held them fast.
Where shall we fly?—to yonder still retreat,
The haunt of Genius and the Muses' seat,
Where all our griefs in others' strains rehearse,
Speak with old Time, and with the dead converse;
Till Fancy, far in distant regions flown,
Adopts a thousand schemes, and quits her own;
Skims every scene, and plans with each design,
Towers in each thought, and lives in every line;
From clime to clime with rapid motion flies,
Weeps without woe, and without sorrow sighs;
To all things yielding, and by all things sway'd,
To all obedient, and by all obey'd;
The scource of pleasures, noble and refined,
And the great empress of the Poet's mind.
Here led by thee, fair Fancy, I behold
The mighty heroes, and the bards of old,
For here the Muses sacred vigils keep,
And all the busy cares of being sleep;

A lighter grief! which feeling hearts endure
Without regret, nor e'en demand a cure.
But what strange art, what magic can dispose
The troubled mind to change its native woes?
Or lead us willing from ourselves, to see
Others more wretched, more undone than we?
This Books can do;—nor this alone; they give
New views to life, and teach us how to live;[3]
They soothe the grieved, the stubborn they chastise,
Fools they admonish, and confirm the wise:[4]
Their aid they yield to all: they never shun
The man of sorrow, nor the wretch undone:
Unlike the hard, the selfish, and the proud,
They fly not sullen from the suppliant crowd;
Nor tell to various people various things,
But show to subjects what they show to kings.[5]

No monarch covets war, nor dreams of fame,
No subject bleeds to raise his tyrant's name,
No proud great man, or man that would be great,
Drives modest merit from its proper state,
Nor rapine reaps the good by labour sown,
Nor envy blasts a laurel, but her own.
Yet Contemplation, silent goddess, here,
In her vast eye, makes all mankind appear,
All Nature's treasures, all the stores of Art,
That fire the fancy, or engage the heart,
The world's vast views, the fancy's wild domain,
And all the motley objects of the brain:
Here mountains hurl'd on mountains proudly rise,
Far, far o'er Nature's dull realities;
Eternal verdure decks a sacred clime,
Eternal spring for ever blooms in rhyme,
And heroes honour'd for imputed deeds,
And saints adored for visionary creeds,
Legends and tales, and solitude and sighs,
Poor doating dreams, and miserable lies,
The empty bubbles of a pensive mind,
And Spleen's sad effort to debase mankind.
Here Wonder gapes at Story's dreadful page,
And Valour mounts by true poetic rage,
And Pity weeps to hear the mourning maid,
And Envy saddens at the praise convey'd.
Devotion kindles at the pious strain,
And mocks the madness of the fool's disdain:
Here gentle Delicacy turns her eye
From the loose page, and blushes her reply,
Alone, unheeded, calls her soul to arms,
Fears every thought, and flies from all alarms.
Pale Study here, to one great point resign'd,
Derides the various follies of mankind;
As distant objects sees their several cares,
And with his own their trifling work compares;
But still forgets like him men take their view,
And near their own, his works are trifling too:—
So suns and planets scarcely fill the eye
When earth's poor hills and man's poor huts are nigh;
But, were the eye in airy regions tost,
The world would lessen, and her hills be lost;
And were the mighty orbs above us known,
No world would seem so trifling as our own.
Here looking back, the wond'ring soul surveys
The sacred relics of departed days,
Where grace, and truth, and excellence reside,
To claim our praise, and mortify our pride;
Favour'd by fate, our mighty fathers found
The virgin Muse, with every beauty crown'd:
They woo'd and won; and, banish'd their embrace,
She comes a harlot to their feebler race:
Deck'd in false taste, with gaudy shows of art,
She charms the eye, but touches not the heart;
By thousands courted, but by few caress'd,
False when pursued, and fatal when possess'd.
From hence we rove, with Fancy for our guide,
O'er this wide world, and other worlds more wide,
Where other suns their vital power display,
And round revolving planets dart the day;
Where comets blaze, by mortals unsurvey'd,
And stray where Galileo never stray'd;
Where God himself conducts each vast machine,
Uncensured by mankind, because unseen.

Come, Child of Care! to make thy soul serene,
Approach the treasures of this tranquil scene;
Survey the dome, and, as the doors unfold,
The soul's best cure, in all her cares, behold!
Where mental wealth the poor in thought may find,
And mental physic the diseased in mind;
See here the balms that passion's wounds assuage;
See coolers here, that damp the fire of rage;
Here alt'ratives, by slow degrees control
The chronic habits of the sickly soul;
And round the heart and o'er the aching head,
Mild opiates here their sober influence shed.[6]
Now bid thy soul man's busy scenes exclude,
And view composed this silent multitude:—

Here, too, we trace the varied scenes of life,
The tyrant husband, the retorting wife,
The hero fearful to appear afraid,
The thoughts of the deliberating maid;
The snares for virtue, and the turns of fate,
The lie of trade, and madness of debate;
Here force deals death around, while fools applaud,
And caution watches o'er the lips of fraud;
Whate'er the world can show, here scorn derides,
And here suspicion whispers what it hides—
The secret thought, the counsel of the breast,
The coming news, and the expected jest,
High panegyric, in exalted style,
That smiles for ever, and provokes a smile,
And Satire, with her fav'rite handmaids by—
Here loud abuse, there simpering irony.
All now display'd, without a mask are known,
And every vice in nature, but our own.
Yet Pleasure too, and Virtue, still more fair,
To this blest seat with mutual speed repair;
The social sweets in life's securer road,
Its bliss unenvied, its substantial good,
The happy thought that conscious virtue gives,
And all that ought to live, and all that lives.]

[3] ["Books without the knowledge of life are useless; for what should books teach but the art of living?"—JOHNSON.]

[4] ["These studies are the food of youth, and the consolation of age: they adorn prosperity, and are the comfort and refuge of adversity: they are pleasant at home, and are of no incumbrance abroad; they accompany us at night on our travels, and in our rural retreats."—CICERO.]

[5] ["The learned world, as I take it, have ever allowed a liberty of thinking and of speaking one's sentiments. That serene republic knows none of the distance and distinctions which custom has introduced into all others. There is a decent familiarity to be admitted between the greatest and the meanest of it. This has often raised a thought in me, which has something wild, and at the same time something very agreeable in it, when indulged to any degree. 'T is in relation to the peculiar happiness of men of letters; in that they can sit down in their closets, and converse with the greatest writers of every age and of any nation; and that in as much freedom and intimacy as their nearest friends could ever use towards any of them when living. What an illustrious assembly is there on these shelves! The courts of Augustus, Louis XIV., or Charles II., never beheld such a frequency of great geniuses as stand round a man in his own private study. How large a happiness is it for a person to have it in his power to say at any time, that he is going to spend an afternoon with the most agreeable and most improving company he will choose out of all ages! If he is in a gay humour, perhaps with Horace and Anacreon and Lord Dorset; or, if more solid, either with Plato or Sir Isaac Newton."—SPENCE, *Essay on Pope's Odyssey.*]

[6] ["A library pharmaceutically disposed would have the appearance of a dispensatory, and might be properly enough so called: and when I recollect how many of our eminent collectors of books have been of the medical faculty, I cannot but think it probable that those great benefactors to literature,

Silent they are—but, though deprived of sound,
Here all the living languages abound;
Here all that live no more; preserved they lie,
In tombs that open to the curious eye.[7]
Blest be the gracious Power, who taught mankind
To stamp a lasting image of the mind!
Beasts may convey, and tuneful birds may sing,
Their mutual feelings, in the opening spring;
But Man alone has skill and power to send
The heart's warm dictates to the distant friend;
'T is his alone to please, instruct, advise
Ages remote, and nations yet to rise.[8]
In sweet repose, when Labour's children sleep,
When Joy forgets to smile and Care to weep,
When Passion slumbers in the lover's breast,
And Fear and Guilt partake the balm of rest,
Why then denies the studious man to share
Man's common good, who feels his common care?
Because the hope is his, that bids him fly
Night's soft repose, and sleep's mild power defy;
That after-ages may repeat his praise,
And fame's fair meed be his, for length of days.
Delightful prospect! when we leave behind
A worthy offspring of the fruitful mind!
Which, born and nursed through many an anxious day,
Shall all our labour, all our care repay.
Yet all are not these births of noble kind,
Not all the children of a vigorous mind;
But where the wisest should alone preside,
The weak would rule us, and the blind would guide;
Nay, man's best efforts taste of man, and show
The poor and troubled source from which they flow;
Where most he triumphs, we his wants perceive,
And for his weakness in his wisdom grieve.
But though imperfect all; yet wisdom loves
This seat serene, and virtue's self approves:—
Here come the grieved, a change of thought to find;
The curious here to feed a craving mind;
Here the devout their peaceful temple choose;
And here the poet meets his favouring Muse.[9]
With awe, around these silent walks I tread;
These are the lasting mansions of the dead:—
"The dead!" methinks a thousand tongues reply;
"These are the tombs of such as cannot die!
"Crown'd with eternal fame, they sit sublime,
"And laugh at all the little strife of time."[10]
Hail, then, immortals! ye who shine above,
Each, in his sphere, the literary Jove;
And ye the common people of these skies,
A humbler crowd of nameless deities;
Whether 't is yours to lead the willing mind
Through History's mazes, and the turnings find;
Or, whether led by Science, ye retire,
Lost and bewilder'd in the vast desire;
Whether the Muse invites you to her bowers,
And crowns your placid brows with living flowers;
Or godlike Wisdom teaches you to show
The noblest road to happiness below;
Or men and manners prompt the easy page
To mark the flying follies of the age:
Whatever good ye boast, that good impart;
Inform the head and rectify the heart.

Lo, all in silence, all in order stand,
And mighty folios[11] first, a lordly band;

Radcliffe, Mead, Sloane, Hunter, and others, have had this very idea in their minds, when they founded their libraries."—CUMBERLAND.]

[7] ["How often does the worm-eaten volume outlast the reputation of the worm-eaten author? Some literary reputations die in the birth; a few are nibbled to death by critics—but they are weakly ones that perish thus; such only as must otherwise soon have come to a natural death. Somewhat more numerous are those which are overfed with praise, and die in the surfeit. Brisk reputations, indeed, are like bottled two-penny, or pop—'they sparkle, are exhaled, and fly,'—not to heaven, but to the Limbo. To live among books is, in this respect, like being among the tombs;—you have in them speaking remembrances of mortality."—SOUTHEY.]

[8] ["As the Supreme Being has expressed, and, as it were, printed his ideas in the creation, men express their ideas in Books—which, by this great invention of these latter ages, may last as long as the sun and moon, and perish only in the general wreck of nature. Thus Cowley, in his poem on the Resurrection, mentioning the destruction of the universe, has these admirable lines:—

'Now all the wide extended sky,
And all th' harmonious worlds on high,
And *Virgil's sacred Work*, shall die.'

There is no other method of fixing these thoughts which arise and disappear in the mind of men, and transmitting them to the last periods of time; no other method of giving a permanency to our ideas, and preserving the knowledge of any particular person, when his body is mixed with the common mass of matter, and his soul retired into the world of spirits. Statues can last but a few thousands of years, edifices fewer, and colours still fewer than edifices."—ADDISON.]

[9] [Here follows, in the original MS.:—

Maxims I glean, of mighty pith and force,
And moral themes to shine in a discourse;
But, tired with these, I take a lighter train,
Tuned to the *times*, impertinent and vain.
The tarts which wits provide for taste decay'd,
And syllabubs by frothy witlings made,
An easy, idle, thoughtless, graceless throng,
Pun, jest, and quibble, epigram and song,
Trifles to which declining genius bends,
And steps by which aspiring wit ascends.
Now sad and slow, with cautious step I tread,
And view around the venerable dead;
For where in all her walks shall study seize
Such monuments of human state as these?]

[10] ["Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them, to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to bring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. It is true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at the ethereal and fifth essence, the breadth of reason itself; slays an immortality rather than a life."—MILTON.]

[11] ["'No man,' Johnson used to say, 'reads long together with a folio on his table. Books,' said he, 'that you may carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are the most

Then quartos[12] their well-order'd ranks maintain,
And light octavos fill a spacious plain:
See yonder, ranged in more frequented rows,
A humbler band of duodecimos;
While undistinguish'd trifles swell the scene,
The last new play and fritter'd magazine.
Thus 't is in life, where first the proud, the great,
In leagued assembly keep their cumbrous state;[13]
Heavy and huge, they fill the world with dread,
Are much admired, and are but little read:
The commons next, a middle rank, are found;
Professions fruitful pour their offspring round;
Reasoners and wits are next their place allow'd,
And last, of vulgar tribes a countless crowd.

First, let us view the form, the size, the dress;[14]
For these the manners, nay the mind express:
That weight of wood, with leathern coat o'erlaid;
Those ample clasps, of solid metal made;
The close-press'd leaves, unclosed for many an age;
The dull red edging of the well-fill'd page;
On the broad back the stubborn ridges roll'd,
Where yet the title stands in tarnish'd gold;
These all a sage and labour'd work proclaim,
A painful candidate for lasting fame:
No idle wit, no trifling verse can lurk
In the deep bosom of that weighty work;
No playful thoughts degrade the solemn style,
Nor one light sentence claims a transient smile.

Hence, in these times, untouch'd the pages lie,
And slumber out their immortality:
They *had* their day, when, after all his toil,
His morning study, and his midnight oil,
At length an author's ONE great work appear'd,
By patient hope, and length of days, endear'd:
Expecting nations hail'd it from the press;
Poetic friends prefix'd each kind address;
Princes and kings received the pond'rous gift,
And ladies read the work they could not lift.
Fashion, though Folly's child, and guide of fools,
Rules e'en the wisest, and in learning rules;
From crowds and courts to Wisdom's seat she goes
And reigns triumphant o'er her mother's foes.
For lo! these fav'rites of the ancient mode[15]
Lie all neglected like the Birthday Ode.[16]

Ah! needless now this weight of massy chain;[17]
Safe in themselves, the once-loved works remain;
No readers now invade their still retreat,
None try to steal them from their parent-seat;
Like ancient beauties, they may now discard
Chains, bolts, and locks, and lie without a guard.

Our patient fathers trifling themes laid by,
And roll'd, o'er labour'd works, th' attentive eye:
Page after page, the much-enduring men
Explored the deeps and shallows of the pen;
Till, every former note and comment known,
They mark'd the spacious margin with their own;
Minute corrections proved their studious care;
The little index, pointing, told us where;
And many an emendation show'd the age
Look'd far beyond the rubric title-page.

Our nicer palates lighter labours seek,
Cloy'd with a folio-*Number* once a week;
Bibles, with cuts and comments, thus go down:
E'en light Voltaire is *number'd* through the town:
Thus physic flies abroad, and thus the law,
From men of study, and from men of straw;
Abstracts, abridgments, please the fickle times,
Pamphlets[18] and plays, and politics and rhymes:
But though to write be now a task of ease,
The task is hard by manly arts to please,
When all our weakness is exposed to view
And half our judges are our rivals too.

useful after all. Such books form the mass of general and easy reading.' He was a great friend to books like the French 'Esprits d'un Tel;' for example 'Beauties of Watts,' &c., &c., 'at which,' said he, 'a man will often look, and be tempted to go on, when he would have been frightened at books of a larger size, and of a more erudite appearance.'"—HAWKINS.]

[12] [Horace Walpole says, "I prefer the quarto to the octavo. A quarto lies free and open before one: it is surprising how long the world was pestered with unwieldy folios. A Frenchman was asked if he liked books in *folio*? 'No,' said he, 'I like them in *fructu*.'" A quarto is now condemned as unwieldy, as a folio was when Walpole wrote; and, if matters go on as they are at present doing, an octavo will be, fifty years hence, an unmanageable tome.]

[13] ["It was the literary humour of a certain Mæcenas, who cheered the lustre of his patronage with the steams of a good dinner, to place his guests according to the size and thickness of the books they had printed. At the head of the table sat those who had published in *folio*, *folissimo*; next the authors in *quarto*, then those in *octavo*. At that table Blackmore would have had the precedence of Gray. Addison, who found this anecdote in one of the Anas, has seized the idea, and applied it, with his felicity of humour, in No. 529 of the Spectator."—D'ISRAELI.]

[14] ["No sooner," says Boswell, "had we made a bow to Mr. Cambridge, in his library, than Johnson ran eagerly to one side of the room, intent on poring over the backs of the books. Mr. Cambridge politely said, 'It seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books.' Johnson, ever ready for contest, instantly answered, 'Sir, the reason is very plain. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do, is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and the backs of books in libraries.'"—CROKER'S *Boswell*, vol. iii. p. 240.]

[15] [Original MS.:—

Yon folios, once the darlings of the mode,
Now lie neglected like the Birthday Ode;
There Learning, stuff'd with maxims trite though sage,
Makes indigestion yawn at every page.
Chain'd like Prometheus, lo! the mighty train
Brave Time's fell tooth, and live and die again;
And now the scorn of men, and now the pride,
The sires respect them, and the sons deride.]

[16] [The first Poet-laureate who expressed his wish to forego the regular production of an ode on the sovereign's birthday, to be set to music and publicly chanted in the royal presence, was Robert Southey, appointed to that office in 1813; and his proposal was, without hesitation, agreed to by King George IV.]

[17] In the more ancient libraries, works of value and importance were fastened to their places by a length of chain; and might so be perused, but not taken away.—["At the view of the Bodleian Library, James the First exclaimed, 'Were I not a king, I would be an university man; and, if it were so that I must be made a prisoner, I would have no other prison than this library, and be chained together with all these goodly authors!' In this exclamation, the king had in his mind the then prevalent custom of securing books by fastening them to the shelves by chains, long enough to reach to the reading-desks under them."—D'ISRAELI.]

[18] ["From pamphlets may be learned the genius of the age, the debates of the learned, the *bévues* of government, and mistakes of the courtiers. Pamphlets furnish beaus with their airs; coquettes with their charms. Pamphlets are as modish ornaments to gentlewomen's toilets, as to gentlemen's pockets: they carry reputation of wit and learning to all that make them their companions; the poor find their account in

Amid these works, on which the eager eye
Delights to fix, or glides reluctant by,
When all combined, their decent pomp display,
Where shall we first our early offering pay?—

To thee, DIVINITY! to thee, the light
And guide of mortals, through their mental night;
By whom we learn our hopes and fears to guide;
To bear with pain, and to contend with pride;
When grieved, to pray; when injured, to forgive;
And with the world in charity to live.[19]
Not truths like these inspired that numerous race,
Whose pious labours fill this ample space;
But questions nice, where doubt on doubt arose,
Awaked to war the long-contending foes.
For dubious meanings, learn'd polemics strove,
And wars on faith prevented works of love;
The brands of discord far around were hurl'd,
And holy wrath inflamed a sinful world:—
Dull though impatient, peevish though devout,
With wit disgusting, and despised without;
Saints in design, in execution men,
Peace in their looks, and vengeance in their pen.[20]
Methinks I see, and sicken at the sight,
Spirits of spleen from yonder pile alight;
Spirits who prompted every damning page,
With pontiff pride and still-increasing rage:
Lo! how they stretch their gloomy wings around,
And lash with furious strokes the trembling ground!
They pray, they fight, they murder, and they weep,—
Wolves in their vengeance, in their manners sheep;
Too well they act the prophet's fatal part,
Denouncing evil with a zealous heart;
And each, like Jonah, is displeased if God
Repent his anger, or withhold his rod.[21]
But here the dormant fury rests unsought,
And Zeal sleeps soundly by the foes she fought;
Here all the rage of controversy ends,
And rival zealots rest like bosom-friends:
An Athanasian here, in deep repose,
Sleeps with the fiercest of his Arian foes;
Socinians here with Calvinists abide,
And thin partitions angry chiefs divide;
Here wily Jesuits simple Quakers meet,
And Bellarmine has rest at Luther's feet.[22]
Great authors, for the church's glory fired,
Are for the church's peace, to rest retired;
And close beside, a mystic, maudlin race,
Lie "Crumbs of Comfort for the Babes of Grace."[23]
Against her foes Religion well defends
Her sacred truths, but often fears her friends;
If learn'd, their pride, if weak, their zeal she dreads,
And their hearts' weakness, who have soundest heads:
But most she fears the controversial pen,
The holy strife of disputatious men;[24]
Who the blest Gospel's peaceful page explore,
Only to fight against its precepts more.[25]
Near to these seats behold yon slender frames,
All closely fill'd and mark'd with modern names;
Where no fair science ever shows her face,
Few sparks of genius, and no spark of grace;

stall-keeping and hawking them; the rich find in them their shortest way to the secrets of church and state. In short, with pamphlets, the booksellers adorn the gaiety of shop-gazing. Hence accrues to grocers, apothecaries, and chandlers, good furniture, and supplies to necessary retreats. In pamphlets, lawyers meet with their chicanery, physicians with their cant, divines with their shibboleth. Pamphlets become more and more daily amusements to the curious, idle, and inquisitive; pastime to gallants and coquettes; chat to the talkative; catch-words to informers; fuel to the envious; poison to the unfortunate; balsam to the wounded; employment to the lazy; and fabulous materials to romancers and novelists."—MYLES DAVIES, *Icon Libellorum*, 1715.]

19 ["It is not the reading many books which makes a man a divine, but the reading a few of the best books often over, and with attention: those, at least, who are beginning their theological studies should follow this rule."—BISHOP WATSON.

"If the reader is disposed to attend to the humble suggestions of a very private layman, I think he would find great advantage in studying and considering the following works, in the order in which they are arranged:—1. The View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion, by Soame Jenyns. 2. The Evidences of Christianity, by Dr. Paley. 3. Grotius on the Truth of the Christian Religion. 4. Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, by Dr. Samuel Clarke. 5. Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity. 6. Bishop Hurd's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies. 7. Lord Lyttelton's Dissertation on the Conversion of St. Paul; and 8. Dr. Butler's Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature. From these few volumes, if they are studied with care and an upright intention, I think it may be said, that 'They shall see to whom He was not (before) spoken of; and they that have not (before) heard, shall understand.'"—MATTHIAS.]

20 ["The history of the scholastic philosophy might furnish a philosophical writer with an instructive theme; it would enter into the history of the human mind, and fill a niche in our literary annals; the works of the scholastics, with the controversies of these *Quodlibetinars*, would at once testify all the greatness and the littleness of the human intellect. Of these scholastic divines, the most illustrious was Saint Thomas Aquinas, styled the angelical doctor. Seventeen folio volumes not only testify his industry, but even his genius. He was a great man busied all his life with making a charade of metaphysics. His 'Sum of all Theology,' a metaphysicological treatise, occupies above 1250 folio pages, of very close print in double columns."—D'ISRAELI.]

21 ["And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry."—*Jonah*, iii. 10.]

22 [Original MS.:—

Calvin grows gentle in this silent coast,
Nor finds a single heretic to roast;
Here, their fierce rage subdued, and lost their pride,
The Pope and Luther slumber side by side.]

23 ["How peaceably they stand together: Papists and Protestants side by side! Their very dust reposes not more quietly in the cemetery. Ancient and modern, Jew and Gentile, Mohammedan and Crusader, French and English, Spaniards and Portuguese, Dutch and Brazilians, fighting their old battles, silently now, upon the same shelf: Fernam Lopez and Pedro de Ayala; John de Laet and Barlæus, with the historians of Joam Fernandez Viera; Fox's Martyrs and the Three Conversions of Father Parsons: Cranmer and Stephen Gardiner; Dominican and Franciscan; Jesuit and Philosophe; Churchmen and Sectarians; Roundheads and Cavaliers!"—SOUTHEY.]

24 ["Your whole school is nothing but a stinking sty of pigs. Dog! do you understand me? Do you understand me, madman? Do you understand me, you great beast?"—CALVIN to LUTHER.]

25 ["These controversial divines have changed the rule of life into a standard of disputation. They have employed the temple of the Most High as a fencing-school, where gymnastic exercises are daily exhibited, and where victory serves only to excite new contests; slighting the bulwarks wherewith He who bestowed religion on mankind had secured it, they have encompassed it with various minute outworks, which an army of warriors can with difficulty defend."—SIR D. DALRYMPLE.]

There sceptics rest, a still-increasing throng,
And stretch their widening wings ten thousand strong;
Some in close fight their dubious claims maintain;
Some skirmish lightly, fly, and fight again;
Coldly profane, and impiously gay,
Their end the same, though various in their way.
When first Religion came to bless the land,
Her friends were then a firm believing band;
To doubt was then to plunge in guilt extreme,
And all was gospel that a monk could dream;
Insulted Reason fled the grov'ling soul,
For Fear to guide, and visions to control:
But now, when Reason has assumed her throne,
She, in her turn, demands to reign alone;
Rejecting all that lies beyond her view,
And, being judge, will be a witness too:
Insulted Faith then leaves the doubtful mind,
To seek for truth, without a power to find:
Ah! when will both in friendly beams unite,
And pour on erring man resistless light?

Next to the seats, well stored with works divine,
An ample space, PHILOSOPHY! is thine;[26]
Our reason's guide, by whose assisting light
We trace the moral bounds of wrong and right;
Our guide through nature, from the sterile clay,
To the bright orbs of yon celestial way!
'T is thine, the great, the golden chain to trace,
Which runs through all, connecting race with race;
Save where those puzzling, stubborn links remain,
Which thy inferior light pursues in vain:—

How vice and virtue in the soul contend;
How widely differ, yet how nearly blend;
What various passions war on either part,
And now confirm, now melt the yielding heart:
How Fancy loves around the world to stray,
While Judgment slowly picks his sober way;
The stores of memory, and the flights sublime
Of genius, bound by neither space nor time;—
All these divine Philosophy explores,
Till, lost in awe, she wonders and adores.
From these, descending to the earth, she turns,
And matter, in its various form, discerns;
She parts the beamy light with skill profound,
Metes the thin air, and weighs the flying sound;
'T is hers the lightning from the clouds to call,
And teach the fiery mischief where to fall.[27]
Yet more her volumes teach,—on these we look
As abstracts drawn from Nature's larger book:
Here, first described, the torpid earth appears,
And next, the vegetable robe it wears;
Where flow'ry tribes, in valleys, fields, and groves,
Nurse the still flame, and feed the silent loves;
Loves, where no grief, nor joy, nor bliss, nor pain,
Warm the glad heart or vex the labouring brain;
But as the green blood moves along the blade,
The bed of Flora on the branch is made;
Where, without passion, love instinctive lives,
And gives new life, unconscious that it gives.[28]
Advancing still in Nature's maze, we trace,
In dens and burning plains, her savage race;
With those tame tribes who on their lord attend,
And find, in man, a master and a friend;

[26] [The edition of 1781 reads as follows:—

To thee, PHILOSOPHY! to thee, the light,
The guide of mortals through their mental night,
By whom the world in all its views is shown,
Our guide through Nature's works, and in our own
Who place in order Being's wondrous chain,
Save where those puzzling, stubborn links remain,
By art divine involved, which man can ne'er explain.
These are thy volumes; and in these we look,
As abstracts drawn from Nature's larger book;
Here first described the humble glebe appears,
Unconscious of the gaudy robe it wears.
All that the earth's profound recesses hide,
And all that roll beneath the raging tide;
The sullen gem that yet disdains to shine,
And all the ductile matter of the mine.
Next to the vegetable tribes they lead,
Whose fruitful beds o'er every balmy mead
Teem with new life; and hills, and vales, and groves,
Feed the still flame, and nurse the silent loves;
Which, when the Spring calls forth their genial power,
Swell with the seed, and flourish in the flower:
There,* with the husband-slaves, in royal pride,
Queens, like the Amazons of old, reside:
There, like the Turk, the lordly husband lives,
And joy to all the gay seraglio gives;
There,† in the secret chambers, veil'd from sight,
A bashful tribe in hidden flames delight;
There,‡ in the open day, and gaily deck'd,
The bolder brides their distant lords expect;
Who with the wings of love instinctive rise,
And on prolific winds each ardent bridegroom flies.
Next are that tribe whom life and sense inform,
The torpid beetle, and the shrinking worm;
And insects, proud to spread their brilliant wing,
To catch the fostering sunbeams of the spring;
That feather'd race, which late from winter fled,
To dream a half-existence with the dead;
Who now, returning from their six months' sleep,
Dip their black pinions in the slumbering deep;
Where, feeling life from stronger beams of day,
The scaly myriads of the ocean play.
Then led by Art through Nature's maze we trace
The sullen people of the savage race;
And see a favourite tribe mankind attend,
And in the fawning follower find the friend:
Man crowns the scene, &c.]

* Alluding to the sexual system of Linnæus.
† The class cryptogamia. ‡ The class diœcia.

[27] [" Dr. Franklin was the first who found out that lightning consisted of electric matter. This great discovery taught us to defend houses and ships and temples from lightning; and also to understand, that people are always perfectly safe in a room during a thunder-storm, if they keep themselves at three or four feet distance from the walls."—DARWIN.]

[28] [Dr. Darwin's imitation of Mr. Crabbe, in his *Botanic Garden*, published in 1792, is obvious:—

" Descend, ye hovering Sylphs! aërial choirs,
And sweep with little hands your silver lyres;
With fairy footsteps print your grassy rings,
Ye Gnomes! accordant to the tinkling strings,
While, in soft notes, I tune to oaten reed
Gay hopes, and amorous sorrows of the mead,
From giant oaks, that wave their branches dark,
To the dwarf moss, that clings upon their bark;
What beaux and beauties crowd the gaudy groves,
And woo and win their vegetable loves:
How snowdrops cold, and blue-eyed harebells blend
Their tender tears, as o'er the stream they bend;
The lovesick violet, and the primrose pale,
Bow their sweet heads, and whisper to the gale;
With secret sighs the virgin lily droops,
And jealous cowslips hang their tawny cups;
How the young rose, in beauty's damask pride,
Drinks the warm blushes of his bashful bride:
With honey'd lips enamour'd woodbines meet;
Clasp with fond arms, and mix their kisses sweet."]

Man [29] crowns the scene, a world of wonders new,
A moral world, that well demands our view.
This world is here; for, of more lofty kind,
These neighbouring volumes reason on the mind;
They paint the state of man ere yet endued
With knowledge;—man, poor, ignorant, and rude;
Then, as his state improves, their pages swell,
And all its cares, and all its comforts, tell:
Here we behold how inexperience buys,
At little price, the wisdom of the wise;
Without the troubles of an active state,
Without the cares and dangers of the great,
Without the miseries of the poor, we know
What wisdom, wealth, and poverty bestow;
We see how reason calms the raging mind,
And how contending passions urge mankind:
Some, won by virtue, glow with sacred fire;
Some, lured by vice, indulge the low desire;
Whilst others, won by either, now pursue
The guilty chase, now keep the good in view;
For ever wretched, with themselves at strife,
They lead a puzzled, vex'd, uncertain life;
For transient vice bequeaths a lingering pain,
Which transient virtue seeks to cure in vain.
Whilst thus engaged, high views enlarge the soul,
New interests draw, new principles control:
Nor thus the soul alone resigns her grief,
But here the tortured body finds relief;
For see where yonder sage Arachnè shapes
Her subtile gin, that not a fly escapes!
There Physic fills the space, and far around,
Pile above pile her learned works abound:
Glorious their aim—to ease the labouring heart;
To war with death, and stop his flying dart;
To trace the source whence the fierce contest grew,
And life's short lease on easier terms renew;
To calm the phrensy of the burning brain;
To heal the tortures of imploring pain;
Or, when more powerful ills all efforts brave,
To ease the victim no device can save,
And smooth the stormy passage to the grave.[30]
But man, who knows no good unmix'd and pure,
Oft finds a poison where he sought a cure;
For grave deceivers lodge their labours here,
And cloud the science they pretend to clear;
Scourges for sin, the solemn tribe are sent;
Like fire and storms, they call us to repent;
But storms subside, and fires forget to rage.
These are eternal scourges of the age:
'T is not enough that each terrific hand
Spreads desolation round a guilty land;
But train'd to ill, and harden'd by its crimes,
Their pen relentless kills through future times.
Say, ye, who search these records of the dead—
Who read huge works, to boast what ye have read;
Can all the real knowledge ye possess,
Or those—if such there are—who more than guess,
Atone for each impostor's wild mistakes,
And mend the blunders pride or folly makes?
What thought so wild, what airy dream so light,
That will not prompt a theorist to write?
What art so prevalent, what proof so strong,
That will convince him his attempt is wrong?
One in the solids finds each lurking ill,
Nor grants the passive fluids power to kill;
A learned friend some subtler reason brings,
Absolves the channels, but condemns their springs;
The subtile nerves, that shun the doctor's eye,
Escape no more his subtler theory;
The vital heat, that warms the labouring heart,
Lends a fair system to these sons of art;

[29] ["It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps, this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is, of knowing good by evil. As, therefore, the state of man now is—what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world; we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue, therefore, which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness; which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser (whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas), describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain. Since, therefore, the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of errour to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger, scout into the regions of sin and falsity, than by reading all manner of tractates, and hearing all manner."—Milton.]

[30] [Sir Henry Halford, in the "Essay on the Influence of Disease on the Mind," has the following striking passages on the conduct proper to be observed by a physician, in withholding, or making his patient acquainted with, his opinion of the probable issue of a malady manifesting mortal symptoms:—"I own, I think it my first duty to protract his life by all practicable means, and to interpose myself between him and every thing which may possibly aggravate his danger. And unless I shall have found him averse from doing what was necessary in aid of my remedies, from a want of a proper sense of his perilous situation, I forbear to step out of the bounds of my province, in order to offer any advice which is not necessary to promote his cure. At the same time, I think it indispensable to let his friends know the danger of his case, the instant I discover it. An arrangement of his worldly affairs, in which the comfort or unhappiness of those who are to come after him is involved, may be necessary; and a suggestion of his danger, by which the accomplishment of this object is to be obtained, naturally induces a contemplation of his more important spiritual concerns. If friends can do their good offices at a proper time, and under the suggestion of the physician, it is far better that they should undertake them, than the medical adviser. But friends may be absent, and nobody near the patient, in his extremity, of sufficient influence or pretension to inform him of his dangerous condition; and surely it is lamentable to think that any human being should leave the world unprepared to meet his Creator. Rather than so, I have departed from my strict professional duty, done that which I would have done by myself, and apprised my patient of the great change he was about to undergo. . . . . Lord Bacon encourages physicians to make it a part of their art to smooth the bed of death, and to render the departure from life easy, placid, and gentle. This doctrine, so accordant with the best principles of our nature, commended not only by the wisdom of this consummate philosopher, but also by the experience of one of the most judicious and conscientious physicians of modern times—the late Dr. Heberden—was practised with such happy success in the case of our late lamented sovereign (George the Fourth), that at the close of his painful disease 'non tam mori videretur (as was said of a Roman emperor), quam dulci et alto sopore excipi.'"]

The vital air, a pure and subtile stream,
Serves a foundation for an airy scheme,
Assists the doctor, and supports his dream.
Some have their favourite ills, and each disease
Is but a younger branch that kills from these;
One to the gout contracts all human pain;
He views it raging in the frantic brain;
Finds it in fevers all his efforts mar,
And sees it lurking in the cold catarrh:
Bilious by some, by others nervous seen,
Rage the fantastic demons of the spleen;
And every symptom of the strange disease
With every system of the sage agrees.
Ye frigid tribe, on whom I wasted long
The tedious hours, and ne'er indulged in song;[31]
Ye first seducers of my easy heart,
Who promised knowledge ye could not impart;
Ye dull deluders, truth's destructive foes;
Ye sons of fiction, clad in stupid prose;
Ye treacherous leaders, who, yourselves in doubt,
Light up false fires, and send us far about;—
Still may yon spider round your pages spin,
Subtile and slow, her emblematic gin!
Buried in dust and lost in silence, dwell,
Most potent, grave, and reverend friends—farewell![32]

Near these, and where the setting sun displays,
Through the dim window, his departing rays,
And gilds yon columns, there, on either side,
The huge Abridgments of the LAW abide;[33]
Fruitful as vice the dread correctors stand,
And spread their guardian terrors round the land;
Yet, as the best that human care can do,
Is mix'd with error, oft with evil too,
Skill'd in deceit, and practised to evade,
Knaves stand secure, for whom these laws were made,
And justice vainly each expedient tries,
While art eludes it, or while power defies.
"Ah! happy age," the youthful poet sings,[34]
"When the free nations knew not laws nor kings;
"When all were blest to share a common store,
"And none were proud of wealth, for none were poor;
"No wars nor tumults vex'd each still domain,
"No thirst of empire, no desire of gain;
"No proud great man, nor one who would be great,
"Drove modest merit from its proper state;
"Nor into distant climes would Avarice roam,
"To fetch delights for Luxury at home:
"Bound by no ties which kept the soul in awe,
"They dwelt at liberty, and love was law!"
"Mistaken youth! each nation first was rude,
"Each man a cheerless son of solitude,
"To whom no joys of social life were known,
"None felt a care that was not all his own;
"Or in some languid clime his abject soul
"Bow'd to a little tyrant's stern control;
"A slave, with slaves his monarch's throne he raised,
"And in rude song his ruder idol praised;
"The meaner cares of life were all he knew;
"Bounded his pleasures, and his wishes few;
"But when by slow degrees the Arts arose,
"And Science waken'd from her long repose;
"When Commerce, rising from the bed of ease,
"Ran round the land, and pointed to the seas;
"When Emulation, born with jealous eye,
"And Avarice, lent their spurs to industry;
"Then one by one the numerous laws were made,
"Those to control, and these to succour trade;
"To curb the insolence of rude command,
"To snatch the victim from the usurer's hand;
"To awe the bold, to yield the wrong'd redress,
"And feed the poor with Luxury's excess."[35]
Like some vast flood, unbounded, fierce, and strong,
His nature leads ungovern'd man along;
Like mighty bulwarks made to stem that tide,
The laws are form'd, and placed on ev'ry side;
Whene'er it breaks the bounds by these decreed,
New statutes rise, and stronger laws succeed;
More and more gentle grows the flying stream,
More and more strong the rising bulwarks seem;

[31] ["The time had come, when Mr. Crabbe was told, and believed, that he had more important concerns to engage him than verse; and therefore, for some years, though he occasionally found time to write lines upon 'Mira's Birthday' and 'Silvia's Lapdog,' though he composed enigmas and solved rebuses, he had some degree of forbearance, and did not believe that the knowledge of diseases, and the sciences of anatomy and physiology, were to be acquired by the perusal of Pope's Homer, a Dictionary of Rhymes, and a Treatise on the Art of Poetry."—See *antè*, p. 9.]

[32] ["About the end of the year 1779, Mr. Crabbe, after as full and perfect a survey of the good and evil before him as his prejudices, inclinations, and little knowledge of the world enabled him to take, finally resolved to abandon his profession. His health was not robust, his spirits were not equal; assistance he could expect none, and he was not so sanguine as to believe he could do without it. With the best verses he could write, and with very little more, he quitted the place of his birth; not without the most serious apprehensions of the consequence of such a step,—apprehensions which were conquered, and barely conquered, by the more certain evil of the prospect before him, should he remain where he was."—See *antè*, p. 12.]

[33] ["Who are they, whose unadorned raiment bespeaks their inward simplicity? These are law-books, statutes, and commentaries on statutes—whom all men must obey, and yet few only can purchase. Like the Sphynx in antiquity, they speak in enigmas, and yet devour the unhappy wretches who comprehend them not. Behold, for our comfort, 'An Abridgment of Law and Equity!' It consists not of many volumes; it extends only to twenty-two folios; yet as a few thin cakes may contain the whole nutritive substance of a stalled ox, so may this compendium contain the essential gravy of many a report and adjudged case. The sages of the law recommend this Abridgment to our perusal. Let us, with all thankfulness of heart, receive their counsel. Much are we beholden to physicians, who only prescribe the bark of the quinquina, when they might oblige their patients to swallow the whole tree!"—SIR D. DALRYMPLE.]

[34] [The original MS., in place of the next lines, reads:—

"Ah! happy age," the youthful poet cries,
"Ere laws arose—ere tyrants bade them rise:
No land-marks then the happy swain beheld,
Nor lords walk'd proudly o'er the furrow'd field;
Nor through distorted ways did Avarice roam,
To fetch delights for Luxury at home:
But mutual joy the friends of Nature proved,
And swains were faithful to the nymphs they loved."
"Mistaken bards! all nations first were rude;
Man! proud, unsocial, prone to solitude,
O'er hills, or vales, or floods, was fond to roam—
The mead his garden, and the rock his home;
For flying prey he search'd a savage coast—
Want was his spur, and liberty his boast."]

[35] [See Blackstone's Commentaries, i. 131, 359; iv. 432.]

Till, like a miner working sure and slow,
Luxury creeps on, and ruins all below;
The basis sinks, the ample piles decay;
The stately fabric shakes and falls away;
Primeval want and ignorance come on,
But Freedom, that exalts the savage state, is gone.[36]

Next, HISTORY ranks;—there full in front she lies,
And every nation her dread tale supplies;
Yet History has her doubts, and every age
With sceptic queries marks the passing page;
Records of old nor later date are clear,
Too distant those, and these are placed too near;
There time conceals the objects from our view,
Here our own passions and a writer's too:[37]
Yet, in these volumes, see how states arose!
Guarded by virtue from surrounding foes;
Their virtue lost, and of their triumphs vain,
Lo! how they sunk to slavery again!
Satiate with power, of fame and wealth possess'd,
A nation grows too glorious to be blest;
Conspicuous made, she stands the mark of all,
And foes join foes to triumph in her fall.
Thus speaks the page that paints ambition's race,
The monarch's pride, his glory,[38] his disgrace;
The headlong course, that madd'ning heroes run,
How soon triumphant, and how soon undone;
How slaves, turn'd tyrants, offer crowns to sale,
And each fall'n nation's melancholy tale.[39]

Lo! where of late the Book of Martyrs stood,
Old pious tracts, and Bibles bound in wood;
There, such the taste of our degenerate age,
Stand the profane delusions of the STAGE:
Yet virtue owns the TRAGIC MUSE a friend,
Fable her means, morality her end;[40]
For this she rules all passions in their turns,
And now the bosom bleeds, and now it burns;
Pity with weeping eye surveys her bowl,
Her anger swells, her terror chills the soul;
She makes the vile to virtue yield applause,
And own her sceptre while they break her laws;[41]
For vice in others is abhorr'd of all,
And villains triumph when the worthless fall.

Not thus her sister COMEDY prevails,
Who shoots at Folly, for her arrow fails;
Folly, by Dullness arm'd, eludes the wound,
And harmless sees the feather'd shafts rebound;
Unhurt she stands, applauds the archer's skill,
Laughs at her malice, and is Folly still.
Yet well the Muse portrays, in fancied scenes,
What pride will stoop to, what profession means;
How formal fools the farce of state applaud;
How caution watches at the lips of fraud;
The wordy variance of domestic life;
The tyrant husband, the retorting wife;
The snares for innocence, the lie of trade,
And the smooth tongue's habitual masquerade.[42]
With her the Virtues too obtain a place,
Each gentle passion, each becoming grace;
The social joy in life's securer road,
Its easy pleasure, its substantial good;
The happy thought that conscious virtue gives,
And all that ought to live, and all that lives.

But who are these? Methinks a noble mien
And awful grandeur in their form are seen,
Now in disgrace: what though by time is spread
Polluting dust o'er every reverend head;
What though beneath yon gilded tribe they lie,
And dull observers pass insulting by:
Forbid it shame, forbid it decent awe,
What seems so grave, should no attention draw!
Come, let us then with reverend step advance,
And greet—the ancient worthies of ROMANCE.[43]

[36] [See Montesquieu's Esprit des Lois, liv. xxii. ch. 22.]

[37] ["Malheureux sort de l'histoire! Les spectateurs sont trop peu instruits, et les acteurs trop intéressés pourque nous puissions compter sur les récits des uns ou des autres!"—GIBBON.]

[38] [—— "*glory* long has made the sages smile;
'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion, wind—
Depending more upon the historian's style,
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle:
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe."—BYRON.]

[39] ["Though the most sagacious author that ever deduced maxims of policy from the experience of former ages has said, that the misgovernment of states, and the evils consequent thereon, have arisen more from historical ignorance than from any other cause, the sum and substance of historical knowledge for practical purposes consists in certain general principles; and he who understands those principles, and has a due sense of their importance, has always, in the darkest circumstances, a star in sight by which he may direct his course."—SOUTHEY.]

[40] ["Tragedies, as they are now made, are good, instructive, moral sermons enough; and it would be a fault not to be pleased with good things. There I learn several great truths: as that it is impossible to see into the ways of futurity; that punishment always attends the villain; that love is the fond soother of the human breast; that we should not resist Heaven's will, for in resisting Heaven's will, Heaven's will is resisted; with several other sentiments equally new, delicate, and striking. Every new tragedy, therefore, I go to see; for reflections of this nature make a tolerable harmony, when mixed up with a proper quantity of drum, trumpet, thunder, lightning, or the scene-shifter's whistle."—GOLDSMITH.]

[41] ["For this the Tragic Muse first trod the stage,
Commanding tears to stream through every age;
Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
And foes to virtue wonder'd how they wept."—POPE.]

[42] ["The days of Comedy are gone, alas!
When Congreve's fool could vie with Molière's *bête*;
Society is smooth'd to that excess,
That manners hardly differ more than dress."—BYRON.]

[43] ["In the view taken by Hurd, Percy, and other older authorities of the origin and history of romantic fiction, their attentions were so exclusively fixed upon the romance of chivalry alone, that they seem to have forgotten that, however interesting and peculiar, it formed only one species of a very numerous and extensive genus. The progress of romance, in fact, keeps pace with that of society, which cannot long exist, even in the simplest state, without exhibiting some specimens of this attractive style of composition. It is not meant, by this assertion, that in early ages such narratives were invented in the character of mere fictions, devised to pass away the leisure of those who have time enough to read and attend to them. On the contrary, romance and real history have the same common origin. It is the aim of the former to maintain as long as possible the mask of veracity; and, indeed, the traditional memorials of all earlier ages partake in such a varied and doubtful degree of the qualities essential to those opposite lines of composition, that they form a mixed class between them; and may be termed either romantic histories, or historical romances, according to the proportion in which their truth is debased by fiction, or their fiction mingled with truth."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

Hence, ye profane! I feel a former dread,
A thousand visions float around my head:
Hark! hollow blasts through empty courts resound,
And shadowy forms with staring eyes stalk round;
See! moats and bridges, walls and castles rise,
Ghosts, fairies, demons, dance before our eyes:—
Lo! magic verse inscribed on golden gate,
And bloody hand that beckons on to fate:—
"And who art thou, thou little page, unfold?
"Say, doth thy lord my Claribel withhold?
"Go tell him straight, Sir Knight, thou must resign
"The captive queen;—for Claribel is mine."
Away he flies; and now for bloody deeds,
Black suits of armour, masks, and foaming steeds;
The giant falls; his recreant throat I seize,
And from his corslet take the massy keys:—
Dukes, lords, and knights in long procession move,
Released from bondage with my virgin love:—
She comes! she comes! in all the charms of youth,
Unequall'd love, and unsuspected truth!
Ah! happy he who thus, in magic themes,
O'er worlds bewitch'd, in early rapture dreams,
Where wild Enchantment waves her potent wand,
And Fancy's beauties fill her fairy land;
Where doubtful objects strange desires excite,
And Fear and Ignorance afford delight.

But lost, for ever lost, to me these joys,[44]
Which Reason scatters, and which Time destroys;
Too dearly bought: maturer judgment calls
My busied mind from tales and madrigals;
My doughty giants all are slain or fled,
And all my knights—blue, green, and yellow—dead!
No more the midnight fairy tribe I view,
All in the merry moonshine tippling dew;
E'en the last lingering fiction of the brain,
The churchyard ghost, is now at rest again;
And all these wayward wanderings of my youth
Fly Reason's power, and shun the light of Truth.
With Fiction[45] then does real joy reside,
And is our reason the delusive guide?
Is it then right to dream the syrens sing?
Or mount enraptured on the dragon's wing?
No; 't is the infant mind, to care unknown,
That makes th' imagined paradise its own;
Soon as reflections in the bosom rise,
Light slumbers vanish from the clouded eyes:
The tear and smile, that once together rose,
Are then divorced; the head and heart are foes:
Enchantment bows to Wisdom's serious plan,
And Pain and Prudence make and mar the man.[46]

While thus, of power and fancied empire vain,
With various thoughts my mind I entertain;

[44] [Original MS.:—

Ah! lost, for ever lost, to me these charms,
These lofty notions and divine alarms,
Too dearly bought—maturer judgment calls
My pensive soul from tales and madrigals—
For who so blest or who so great as I,
Wing'd round the globe with Rowland or Sir Guy?
Alas! no more I see my queen repair
To balmy bowers that blossom in the air,
Where on their rosy beds the Graces rest,
And not a care lies heavy on the breast.
No more the hermit's mossy cave I choose,
Nor o'er the babbling brook delight to muse;
My doughty giants all are slain or fled,
And all my knights—blue, green, and yellow—dead!
Magicians cease to charm me with their art,
And not a griffin flies to glad my heart,
No more the midnight fairy tribe I view,
All in the merry moonshine tippling dew.
The easy joys that charm'd my sportive youth,
Fly Reason's power, and shun the voice of Truth.
Maturer thoughts severer taste prepares,
And baffles every spell that charm'd my cares.
Can Fiction, then, the noblest bliss supply,
Or joy reside in inconsistency?
Is it then right, &c.]

[45] ["Truth is always strange—
Stranger than Fiction. If it could be told,
How much would Novels gain by the exchange!
How differently the world would men behold!
How oft would vice and virtue places change!
The new world would be nothing to the old,
If some Columbus of the moral seas
Would show mankind their souls' antipodes."—Byron.]

[46] [Here follows, in the original draft:—

But who are these, a tribe that soar above,
And tell more tender tales of modern love?
A Novel train! the brood of old Romance,
Conceived by Folly on the coast of France,
That now with lighter thought, and gentler fire,
Usurp the honours of their drooping sire;
And still fantastic, vain, and trifling, sing
Of many a soft and inconsistent thing,—
Of rakes repenting, clogg'd in Hymen's chain—
Of nymph reclined by unpresuming swain—
Of captains, colonels, lords, and amorous knights,
That find in humbler nymphs such chaste delights,
Such heavenly charms, so gentle, yet so gay,
That all their former follies fly away.
Honour springs up, where'er their looks impart
A moment's sunshine to the harden'd heart—
A virtue, just before the rover's jest,
Grows like a mushroom in his melting breast.
Much, too, they tell of cottages and shades,
Of balls, and routs, and midnight masquerades,
Where dangerous men and dangerous mirth reside,
And Virtue goes—on purpose to be tried.
These are the tales that wake the soul to life,
That charm the sprightly niece and forward wife,
That form the manners of a polish'd age,
And each pure easy moral of the Stage.
Thus to her friend the ever-faithful she—
The tender Delia—writes, securely free—
Delia from school was lately bold to rove,
Where yet Lucinda meditated love—
"Oh thou, the partner of my pensive breast,
And, but for one! its most delightful guest,
But for that one of whom 't was joy to talk,
When the chaste moon gleam'd o'er our evening walk,
And, cooing fondly in the neighbouring groves,
The pretty songsters all enjoy'd their loves;
Receive! as witness all ye powers! I send,
With melting heart, this token of thy friend.
"Calm was the night! and every breeze was low;
Swift ran the stream—but, ah! the moments slow!
Fly swift, ye moments! slowly run, thou stream,
And on thy margin let a maiden dream.
"Methought he came, my Harry, young and gay,
The very youth that stole my heart away.
I wake. Surprise! yet guess how blest was I!
With looks of love—the very youth was by.
'Whose is that form my Delia's bosom hides?'
What youth divinely blest within presides?'
He spoke and sigh'd. His sighs my fear supprest,
He seized his angel form, and actions spoke the rest.
"Oh, Virtue! brighter than the noontide ray!
Still guide my steps, and guide them nature's way;
With sacred precepts fill the youthful mind,
Soothe all its cares, and force it to be kind."
Thus, gentle passions warm the generous maid,
No more reluctant, and no more afraid;
Thus Virtue shines, and in her loveliest dress
Not over nice, nor Virtue to excess.
Near these I look, and lo! a reptile race,
In goodly vests conceal the want of grace;
The brood of Humour, Fancy, Frolic, Fun,
The tale obscene, the miserable pun!

While books, my slaves, with tyrant hand I seize,
Pleased with the pride that will not let them please,
Sudden I find terrific thoughts arise,
And sympathetic sorrow fills my eyes;
For, lo! while yet my heart admits the wound,
I see the CRITIC army ranged around.[47]
Foes to our race! if ever ye have known
A father's fears for offspring of your own;[48]
If ever, smiling o'er a lucky line,
Ye thought the sudden sentiment divine,
Then paused and doubted, and then, tired of doubt,
With rage as sudden dash'd the stanza out;—
If, after fearing much and pausing long,
Ye ventured on the world your labour'd song,
And from the crusty critics of those days
Implored the feeble tribute of their praise;
Remember now the fears that moved you then,
And, spite of truth, let mercy guide your pen.
What vent'rous race are ours! what mighty foes
Lie waiting all around them to oppose!

The jest that Laughter loves, he knows not why,
And Whim tells quaintly with distorted eye.
Here Languor, yawning, pays his first devoirs,
And skims sedately o'er his dear Memoirs;
Here tries his tedious moments to employ,
And, palsied by enjoyment, dreams of joy;
From all the tribe his little knowledge steals,
From dull "Torpedoes," and "Electric Eels;" *
And every trifle of a trifling age,
That shames the closet, or degrades the Stage.]

[47] [Original MS.:—

Here as I stand, of sovereign power possess'd,
A vast ambition fires my swelling breast;
I deal destruction round, and, all severe,
Damn with a dash, and censure with a sneer;
Or from the Critic wrest a sinking cause,
Rejudge his justice, and repeal his laws:
Now half by judgment guided, half by whim,
I grasp disputed power, and tyrannise like him;
Food for the mind I seek; but who shall find
The food that satisfies the craving mind?
Like fire it rages; and its fatal rage
What pains can deaden, and what care assuage?
Choked by its fuel, though it clouded lies,
It soon eats through, and craves for new supplies;
Now here, now there, with sudden fury breaks
And to its substance turns whate'er it takes.
To weighty themes I fly with eager haste,
And skim their treasures like the man of taste;
From a few pages learn the whole design,
And damn a book for one suspicious line,
Or steals its sentiments, and call them mine!]

[48] ["None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears."—

So writes Cowper—and in illustration of his lines it may be permitted to quote one of his own private letters in 1782:—"Before I had published, I said to myself, 'You and I, Mr. Cowper, will not concern ourselves much about what the critics may say of our book.' But, having once sent my wits for a venture, I soon became anxious about the issue, and found that I could not be satisfied with a warm place in my own good graces, unless my friends were pleased with me as much as I pleased myself. Meeting with their approbation, I began to feel the workings of ambition. 'It is well,' said I, 'that my friends are pleased; but friends are sometimes partial, and mine, I have reason to think, are not altogether free from bias: methinks I should like to hear a stranger or two speak well of me.' I was presently gratified by the approbation of the London Magazine and the Gentleman's, and by the plaudit of Dr. Franklin: but the Monthly Review, the most formidable of all my judges, is still behind. What will

* [Two poems, designated, by the Monthly Reviewers, "poetical smut—Rochester revived."]

What treacherous friends betray them to the fight!
What dangers threaten them!—yet still they write:
A hapless tribe! to every evil born,
Whom villains hate, and fools affect to scorn:
Strangers they come, amid a world of woe,
And taste the largest portion ere they go.[49]
Pensive I spoke, and cast mine eyes around;
The roof, methought, return'd a solemn sound;
Each column seem'd to shake, and clouds, like smoke,
From dusty piles and ancient volumes broke;
Gathering above, like mists condensed they seem,
Exhaled in summer from the rushy stream;
Like flowing robes they now appear, and twine
Round the large members of a form divine;
His silver beard, that swept his aged breast,
His piercing eye, that inward light express'd,
Were seen,—but clouds and darkness veil'd the rest.
Fear chill'd my heart: to one of mortal race,
How awful seem'd the Genius of the place!

this critical Rhadamanthus say, when my shivering genius shall appear before him? Still he keeps me in hot water, and I must wait another month for his award."]

[49] ["Fortune has rarely condescended to be the companion of genius: the dunce finds a hundred roads to her palace; there is but one open, and that a very indifferent one, for men of letters. Why should we not erect an asylum for venerable genius, as we do for the brave and the helpless part of our citizens? When even fame will not protect the man of genius from famine, charity ought. Nor should such an act be considered as a debt incurred by the helpless member, but a tribute we pay to genius. Even in these enlightened times, such have lived in obscurity, while their reputation was widely spread; and have perished in poverty, while their works were enriching the booksellers."—D'ISRAELI.

"We have living minds, who have done their duty to their own age and to posterity. Such men complain not of the age, but of an anomalous injustice in the laws. They complain that authors are deprived of a perpetual property in the produce of their own labours, when all other persons enjoy it as an indefeasible and acknowledged right;—and they ask, upon what principle, with what equity, or under what pretence of public good, they are subjected to this injurious enactment? Is it because their labour is so light, the endowments which are required for it so common, the attainments so cheaply and easily acquired, and the present remuneration in all cases so adequate, so ample, and so certain? The act is so curiously injurious in its operation, that it bears with most hardship upon the best works. For books of great immediate popularity have their run, and come to a dead stop: the hardship is upon those which win their way slowly and difficultly, but keep the field at last. In such cases, when the copyright, as by the existing law, departs from the author's family at his death, or at the end of twenty-eight years from the first publication of every work (if he dies before the expiration of that term), his representatives are deprived of their property just as it would begin to prove a valuable inheritance. The last descendants of Milton died in poverty. The descendants of Shakspeare are living in poverty, and in the lowest condition of life. Is this just to these individuals? Is it grateful to the memory of those who are the pride and boast of their country? Is it honourable or becoming to us, as a nation, holding the name of Shakspeare and Milton in veneration? To have placed the descendants of Shakspeare and Milton in respectability and comfort, simple justice was all that was required;—only that they should have possessed the perpetual copyright of their ancestors' works—only that they should not have been deprived of their proper inheritance. Believing as I do, that if society continues to improve, no injustice will long be permitted to continue after it has been fairly exposed, and is clearly apprehended, I cannot but believe that a time must come when the rights of literature will be acknowledged, and its wrong redressed; and that those authors hereafter who shall deserve well of posterity, will have no cause to reproach themselves for having sacrificed the interests of their children when they disregarded the pursuit of fortune for themselves."—SOUTHEY.]

So in Cimmerian shores, Ulysses saw
His parent-shade, and shrunk in pious awe;[50]
Like him I stood, and wrapt in thought profound,
When from the pitying power broke forth a solemn sound:—

" Care lives with all;[51] no rules, no precepts save
" The wise from woe, no fortitude the brave;
" Grief is to man as certain as the grave:
" Tempests and storms in life's whole progress rise,
" And hope shines dimly through o'erclouded skies;
" Some drops of comfort on the favour'd fall,
" But showers of sorrow are the lot of *all*:[52]
" Partial to talents, then, shall Heav'n withdraw
" Th' afflicting rod, or break the general law?
" Shall he who soars, inspired by loftier views,
" Life's little cares and little pains refuse?
" Shall he not rather feel a double share
" Of mortal woe, when doubly arm'd to bear?
" Hard is his fate who builds his peace of mind
" On the precarious mercy of mankind;
" Who hopes for wild and visionary things,
" And mounts o'er unknown seas with vent'rous wings:
" But as, of various evils that befall
" The human race, some portion goes to all;
" To him perhaps the milder lot 's assigned,
" Who feels his consolation in his mind

" And, lock'd within his bosom, bears about
" A mental charm for every care without.[53]
" E'en in the pangs of each domestic grief,
" Or health or vigorous hope affords relief;
" And every wound the tortured bosom feels,
" Or virtue bears, or some preserver heals;
" Some generous friend of ample power possess'd;
" Some feeling heart, that bleeds for the distress'd;
" Some breast that glows with virtues all divine;
" Some noble RUTLAND,[54] misery's friend and thine.
" Nor say, the Muse's song, the Poet's pen,
" Merit the scorn they meet from little men.
" With cautious freedom if the numbers flow,
" Not wildly high, nor pitifully low;
" If vice alone their honest aims oppose,
" Why so ashamed their friends, so loud their foes?
" Happy for men in every age and clime,
" If all the sons of vision dealt in rhyme.
" Go on, then, Son of Vision! still pursue
" Thy airy dreams; the world is dreaming too.
" Ambition's lofty views, the pomp of state,
" The pride of wealth, the splendour of the great,
" Stripp'd of their mask, their cares and troubles known,
" Are visions far less happy than thy own:

[50] ["Struck at the sight, I melt with filial woe,
And down my cheek the pious sorrows flow."—
POPE'S *Homer*.]

[51] [" The canker-worm
Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,
As well as further drain the wither'd form.
Care, like a housekeeper, brings every week
His bills in, and, however we may storm,
They must be paid:—though six days smoothly run,
The seventh will bring blue-devils, or a dun."—BYRON.]

[52] ["Cares, both in kind and degree, are as innumerable as the sands of the sea-shore; and the fable which Hyginus has so pleasantly constructed on this subject, shows that man is their proper prey. 'Care,' says he, 'crossing a dangerous brook, collected a mass of the dirty slime which deformed its banks, and moulded it into the image of an earthly being, which Jupiter, on passing by soon afterwards, touched with ethereal fire and warmed into animation; but, being at a loss what name to give this new production, and disputing to whom of right it belonged, the matter was referred to Saturn, who decreed that his name should be MAN, *Homo ab humo*, from the dirt of which he had been made; that care should entirely possess his mind while living; that Tellus, or the earth, should receive his body when dead; and that Jupiter should dispose of his celestial essence according to his discretion. Thus was man made the property of care from his original formation; and discontent, the offspring of care, has ever since been his inseparable companion.' "—BURTON.]

[53] ["It is to literature, humanly speakly, that I am beholden for every blessing which I enjoy,—health of mind and activity of mind, contentment, cheerfulness, continued employment, and therewith continual pleasure. 'In omnibus requiem quæsivi,' said Thomas à Kempis, 'sed non inveni nisi in angulis et libellis.' I too have found repose where he did, in books. Wherever these books of mine may be dispersed, there is not one among them that will ever be more comfortably lodged, or more highly prized by its possessor; and generations may pass away before some of them will again find a reader. It is well that we do not moralise too much upon such subjects—

'For foresight is a melancholy gift,
Which bares the bald, and speeds the all-too-swift.'

But the dispersion of a library, whether in retrospect or in anticipation, is always to me a melancholy thing. How many such dispersions must have taken place to have made it possible that these books should thus be brought together here among the Cumberland mountains! Not a few of these volumes have been cast up from the wreck of the family or convent libraries during the late revolution.....I am sorry when I see the name of a former owner obliterated in a book, or the plate of his arms defaced. Poor memorials though they be, yet they are something saved for a while from oblivion; and I should be almost as unwilling to destroy them, as to efface the *Hic jacet* of a tombstone. There may be sometimes a pleasure in recognising them, sometimes a salutary sadness."—SOUTHEY.]

[54] [Charles, fourth Duke of Rutland, died in 1787. See *antè*, p. 31. The following eulogium on his Grace was delivered by Bishop Watson, in the House of Peers:—"The dead, my lords, listen not to the commendation of the living; or, greatly as I loved him, I would not now have praised him. The world was not aware of half his ability—was not conscious of half his worth. I had long and intimate experience of them both. His judgment, in the conduct of public affairs was, I verily believe, equalled by few men of his age; his probity and disinterestedness were exceeded by none. All the letters which I received from him respecting the public state of Ireland (and they were not a few) were written with profound good sense: they all breathe the same liberal spirit, have all the same common tendency:—not that of aggrandising Great Britain by the ruin of Ireland—not that of benefiting Ireland at the expense of Great Britain—but that of promoting the united interests of both countries, as essential parts of the common empire. In private life, I know that he had a strong sense of religion: he showed it in imitating his illustrious father in one of its most characteristic parts, that of being alive to every impulse of compassion. His family, his friends, his dependants, all his connections, can witness for me the warmth and sincerity of his personal attachments. Ever since he was admitted as a pupil under me at Cambridge, I have loved him with the affection of a brother. His memory, I trust, will be long revered by the people of this country—long held dear by the people of Ireland—and by myself I know it will be held most dear as long as I live." From the introduction of the Duke of Rutland's name in "The Library," it may be inferred that Mr. Burke had presented Mr. Crabbe to his Grace at least a year before his appointment as Domestic Chaplain at Belvoir.]

" Go on! and, while the sons of care complain,
" Be wisely gay and innocently vain;
" While serious souls are by their fears undone,
" Blow sportive bladders in the beamy sun,
" And call them worlds! and bid the greatest show
" More radiant colours in their worlds below:
" Then, as they break, the slaves of care reprove,
" And tell them, Such are all the toys they love." [55]

[55] [On the appearance of "The Library" in 1781, it was pronounced by the Monthly Review to be "the production of no common pen:" and the Critical Review said—"A vein of good sense and philosophic reflection runs through this little performance, which distinguishes it from most modern poems. The rhymes are correct, and the versification smooth and harmonious. It is observable that the author, in his account of all the numerous volumes in every science, has never characterised or entered into the merits of any particular writer, though he had so fair an opportunity from the nature of his subject." The reader of Mr. Crabbe's Life can be at no loss to account for his abstinence from such details as are here alluded to. The author, when he wrote this poem, had probably never seen any considerable collection of books, except in his melancholy visits to the shops of booksellers in London in 1780-81.]

THE VILLAGE.

IN TWO BOOKS.

BOOK I.[1]

The Subject proposed—Remarks upon Pastoral Poetry—A Tract of Country near the Coast described—An impoverished Borough—Smugglers and their Assistants—Rude Manners of the Inhabitants—Ruinous Effects of a high Tide—The Village Life more generally considered: Evils of it—The youthful Labourer—The old Man: his Soliloquy—The Parish Workhouse: its Inhabitants—The sick Poor: their Apothecary—The dying Pauper—The Village Priest.

THE Village Life, and every care that reigns
O'er youthful peasants and declining swains;
What labour yields, and what, that labour past,
Age, in its hour of languor, finds at last;
What form the real Picture of the Poor,
Demand a song—the Muse can give no more.
Fled are those times, when, in harmonious strains,
The rustic poet praised his native plains:
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymphs rehearse;[2]
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains,[3] alas! they never feel.
On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,
If Tityrus found the Golden Age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?[4]
Yes, thus the Muses sing of happy swains,
Because the Muses never knew their pains:
They boast their peasants' pipes; but peasants now
Resign their pipes and plod behind the plough;
And few, amid the rural tribe, have time
To number syllables and play with rhyme;
Save honest Duck,[5] what son of verse could share
The poet's rapture and the peasant's care?

[1] [The first edition of "The Village" appeared in May, 1783. See *ante*, p. 34, and the Author's preface, p. 96.]

[2] [*Strephon.* "In spring the fields, in autumn hills I love,
At morn the plains, at noon the shady grove,
But Delia always; absent from her sight,
Nor plains at morn, nor groves at noon delight.
Daphnis. Sylvia's like autumn ripe, yet mild as May,
More bright than noon, yet fresh as early day," &c.—POPE.]

[3] ["In order to form a right judgment of pastoral poetry, it will be necessary to cast back our eyes on the first ages of the world. The abundance they were possessed of, secured them from avarice, ambition, or envy; they could scarce have any anxieties or contentions, where every one had more than he could tell what to do with. Love, indeed, might occasion some rivalships amongst them, because many lovers fix upon one subject, for the loss of which they will be satisfied with no compensation. Otherwise it was a state of ease, innocence, and contentment; where plenty begot pleasure, and pleasure begot singing, and singing begot poetry, and poetry begot pleasure again. An author, therefore, that would write pastorals should form in his fancy a rural scene of perfect ease and tranquillity, where innocence, simplicity, and joy abound. It is not enough that he writes about the country; he must give us what is agreeable in that scene, and hide what is wretched. Let the tranquillity of the pastoral life appear full and plain, but hide the meanness of it; represent its simplicity as clear as you please, but cover its misery. As there is no condition exempt from anxiety, I will allow shepherds to be afflicted with such misfortunes as the loss of a favourite lamb, or a faithless mistress. He may, if you please, pick a thorn out of his foot, or vent his grief for losing the prize in dancing; but these being small torments, they recommend that state which only produces such trifling evils."—STEELE.

[4] ["This year (1783) I had," says Boswell, "an opportunity of seeing, by means of one of his friends, a proof that Dr. Johnson's talents, as well as his obliging services to authors, were ready as ever. He had revised 'The Village,' an admirable poem, by the Rev. Mr. Crabbe. Its sentiments as to the false notions of rustic happiness and rustic virtue were quite congenial with his own; and he took the trouble, not only to suggest slight corrections and variations, but to furnish some lines, when he thought he could give the writer's meaning better than in the words of the manuscript. I shall give an instance, marking the original by Roman, and Johnson's substitution in *Italic* characters:

"'In fairer scenes, where peaceful pleasures spring,
Tityrus, the pride of Mantuan swains, might sing:
But, charm'd by him, or smitten with his views,
Shall modern poets court the Mantuan muse?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Fancy leads, or Virgil led the way?'

"'*On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign*,' &c.

Here we find Dr. Johnson's poetical and critical powers undiminished. I must, however, observe, that the aids he gave to this poem were so small as by no means to impair the distinguished merit of the author."—CROKER'S *Boswell*, vol. v. p. 55.]

[5] [Stephen Duck, the poetical thresher. "It was his lot," says Mr. Southey, "to be duck-peck'd by his lawful wife, who told all the neighbourhood that her husband dealt with the devil, or was going mad; for he did nothing but talk to himself and tell his fingers." Some of his verses having been shown to Queen Caroline, she settled twelve shillings a week upon him, and appointed him keeper of her select library at Richmond, called Merlin's Cave. He afterwards took orders, and obtained the living of Byfleet, in Surrey. Gay, in a let-

Or the great labours of the field degrade,
With the new peril of a poorer trade?[6]
From this chief cause these idle praises spring,
That themes so easy few forbear to sing;
For no deep thought the trifling subjects ask;
To sing of shepherds is an easy task:[7]
The happy youth assumes the common strain,
A nymph his mistress, and himself a swain;
With no sad scenes he clouds his tuneful prayer,
But all, to look like her, is painted fair.
I grant indeed that fields and flocks have charms
For him that grazes or for him that farms;
But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace
The poor laborious natives of the place,
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,
On their bare heads and dewy temples play;
While some, with feebler heads and fainter hearts,
Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts—
Then shall I dare these real ills to hide
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?
No; cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;[8]
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the Cot,
As Truth will paint it, and as Bards will not:
Nor you, ye Poor, of letter'd scorn complain,
To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour, and bow'd down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?
Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;[9]
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy, and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;[10]
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.
So looks the nymph whom wretched arts adorn,
Betray'd by man, then left for man to scorn;
Whose cheek in vain assumes the mimic rose,
While her sad eyes the troubled breast disclose;
Whose outward splendour is but folly's dress,
Exposing most, when most it gilds distress.
Here joyless roam a wild amphibious race,
With sullen woe display'd in every face;
Who, far from civil arts and social fly,
And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye.
Here too the lawless merchant of the main
Draws from his plough th' intoxicated swain;
Want only claim'd the labour of the day,
But vice now steals his nightly rest away.
Where are the swains, who, daily labour done,
With rural games play'd down the setting sun;
Who struck with matchless force the bounding ball,
Or made the pond'rous quoit obliquely fall;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engaged some artful strippling of the throng,
And fell beneath him, foil'd, while far around
Hoarse triumph rose, and rocks return'd the sound?[11]
Where now are these?—Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnace where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or, when detected, in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or, yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.
Here, wand'ring long, amid these frowning fields,
I sought the simple life that Nature yields;
Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurp'd her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race;
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,
Wait on the shore, and, as the waves run high,
On the tost vessel bend their eager eye,
Which to their coast directs its vent'rous way;
Theirs, or the ocean's, miserable prey.
As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land;
While still for flight the ready wing is spread:
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled;
Fled from these shores where guilt and famine reign,
And cried, Ah! hapless they who still remain;

ter to Swift, says, "I do not envy Stephen Duck, who is the favourite poet of the court;" and Swift wrote upon him the following epigram:—

"The thresher, Duck, could o'er the Queen prevail;
The proverb says, 'no fence against a flail.'
From *threshing* corn, he turns to thresh his brains,
For which her Majesty allows him *grains*;
Though 't is confest, that those who ever saw
His poems, think them all not worth a *straw*.
Thrice happy Duck! employ'd in threshing *stubble*,
Thy toil is lessen'd, and thy profits double."

Stephen's end was an unhappy one. Growing melancholy, in 1750, he threw himself into the river near Reading, and was drowned.]

6 ["Robert Bloomfield had better have remained a shoemaker, or even a farmer's boy; for he would have been a farmer perhaps in time; and now he is an unfortunate poet."—CRABBE'S *Journal*, 1817.]

7 [Original edition:—

They ask no thought, require no deep design,
But swell the song, and liquefy the line.]

8 [Aldborough was, half a century ago, a poor and wretched place. It consisted of two parallel and unpaved streets, running between mean and scrambling houses, the abodes *of* seafaring men, pilots, and fishers. . . . Such was the squalid scene that first opened on the author of "The Village." See *anté*, p. 3.]

9 [This picture was copied, in every respect, from the scene of the poet's nativity and boyish days. See *anté*, p. 3.]

10 ["This is a fine description of that peculiar sort of barrenness which prevails along the sandy and thinly inhabited shores of the channel."—JEFFREY.]

11 [Original MS.:—

And foil'd beneath the young Ulysses fell,
When peals of praise the merry mischief tell?]

Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,
Whose greedy waves devour the lessening shore;
Till some fierce tide,[12] with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away;
When the sad tenant weeps from door to door;
And begs a poor protection from the poor![13]
But these are scenes where Nature's niggard hand
Gave a spare portion to the famish'd land;
Hers is the fault, if here mankind complain
Of fruitless toil and labour spent in vain;
But yet in other scenes more fair in view,
When plenty smiles—alas! she smiles for few—
And those who taste not, yet behold her store,
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore—
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.
Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go then! and see *them* rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;[14]
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
See them alternate suns and showers engage,
And hoard up aches and anguish for their age;
Through fens and marshy moors their steps pursue,
When their warm pores imbibe the evening dew;
Then own that labour may as fatal be
To these thy slaves, as thine excess to thee.[15]
Amid this tribe too oft a manly pride
Strives in strong toil the fainting heart to hide;
There may you see the youth of slender frame
Contend with weakness, weariness, and shame;
Yet, urged along, and proudly loth to yield,
He strives to join his fellows of the field:
Till long-contending nature droops at last,
Declining health rejects his poor repast,
His cheerless spouse the coming danger sees,
And mutual murmurs urge the slow disease.
Yet grant them health, 'tis not for us to tell,
Though the head droops not, that the heart is well;
Or will you praise that homely, healthy fare,
Plenteous and plain, that happy peasants share!
Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel,
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal;
Homely, not wholesome, plain, not plenteous, such
As you who praise would never deign to touch.

Ye gentle souls, who dream of rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please;
Go! if the peaceful cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if peace be there;
If peace be his—that drooping weary sire,
Or theirs, that offspring round their feeble fire;
Or hers, that matron pale, whose trembling hand
Turns on the wretched hearth th' expiring brand!
Nor yet can Time itself obtain for these
Life's latest comforts, due respect and ease;
For yonder see that hoary swain, whose age
Can with no cares except its own engage;
Who, propt on that rude staff, looks up to see
The bare arms broken from the withering tree,
On which, a boy, he climb'd the loftiest bough,
Then his first joy, but his sad emblem now.
He once was chief in all the rustic trade;
His steady hand the straightest furrow made;
Full many a prize he won, and still is proud
To find the triumphs of his youth allow'd;[16]
A transient pleasure sparkles in his eyes,
He hears and smiles, then thinks again and sighs:
For now he journeys to his grave in pain;
The rich disdain him; nay the poor disdain:
Alternate masters now their slave command,
Urge the weak efforts of his feeble hand,
And, when his age attempts its task in vain,
With ruthless taunts, of lazy poor complain.[17]
Oft may you see him, when he tends the sheep,
His winter charge, beneath the hillock weep;
Oft hear him murmur to the winds that blow
O'er his white locks and bury them in snow,
When, rous'd by rage and muttering in the morn,
He mends the broken hedge with icy thorn:—
"Why do I live, when I desire to be
"At once from life and life's long labour free?
"Like leaves in spring, the young are blown away,
"Without the sorrows of a slow decay;
"I, like yon wither'd leaf remain behind,
"Nipt by the frost, and shivering in the wind;
"There it abides till younger buds come on,
"As I, now all my fellow-swains are gone;
"Then from the rising generation thrust,
"It falls, like me, unnoticed to the dust.
"These fruitful fields, these numerous flocks I see,
"Are others' gain, but killing cares to me;

[12] [Mr. Crabbe was often heard to describe a remarkable spring-tide, in January, 1779, when eleven houses at Aldborough were at once demolished.]

[13] [These lines, expressive of Mr. Crabbe's feelings on quitting his native place, were, he had reason to believe, the very verses which first satisfied Burke that he was a poet. See *antè*, p. 13.]

[14] [Original MS.:—

Like him to make the plenteous harvest grow,
And yet not share the plenty they bestow.]

[15] ["Let those who feast at ease on dainty fare
Pity the reapers, who their feasts prepare:
For toils scarce ever ceasing press us now—
Rest never does but on the Sabbath show;
And barely that our masters will allow.
Think what a painful life we daily lead;
Each morning early rise, go late to bed;
Nor when asleep are we secure from pain—
We then perform our labours o'er again.
Hard fate! our labours even in sleep don't cease;
Scarce Hercules e'er felt such toils as these!"—DUCK.]

[16] ["Mr. Crabbe exhibits the common people of England pretty much as they are, and as they must appear to every one who will take the trouble of examining into their condition; at the same time that he renders his sketches in a very high degree interesting and beautiful,—by selecting what is most fit for description; by grouping them in such forms as must catch the attention or awake the memory; and by scattering over the whole, such traits of moral sensibility, of sarcasm, and of useful reflection, as every one must feel to be natural, and own to be powerful. In short, he shows us something which we have all seen, or may see, in real life; and draws from it such feelings and such reflections, as every human being must acknowledge that it is calculated to excite. He delights us by the truth, and vivid and picturesque beauty, of his representations, and by the force and pathos of the sensations with which we feel that they ought to be connected."—JEFFREY.]

[17] A pauper who, being nearly past his labour, is employed by different masters for a length of time, proportioned to their occupations.

" To me the children of my youth are lords,
" Cool in their looks, but hasty in their words: [18]
" Wants of their own demand their care; and who
" Feels his own want and succours others too?
" A lonely, wretched man, in pain I go,
" None need my help, and none relieve my woe;
" Then let my bones beneath the turf be laid,
" And men forget the wretch they would not aid."
Thus groan the old, till by disease oppress'd,
They taste a final woe, and then they rest.

Theirs is yon House that holds the parish poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
There, where the putrid vapours, flagging, play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day;—
There children dwell who know no parents' care;
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there!
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed;
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood fears;
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot, and the madman gay.[19]

Here too the sick their final doom receive,
Here brought, amid the scenes of grief, to grieve,
Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow,
Mixt with the clamours of the crowd below;
Here, sorrowing, they each kindred sorrow scan,
And the cold charities of man to man:
Whose laws indeed for ruin'd age provide,
And strong compulsion plucks the scrap from pride;
But still that scrap is bought with many a sigh,
And pride embitters what it can't deny.

Say, ye, oppress by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance
With timid eye to read the distant glance;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,
To name the nameless ever new disease;
Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that alone can cure;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despised, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath
Where all that's wretched paves the way for death? [20]

Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
And naked rafters form the sloping sides;
Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
And lath and mud are all that lie between;
Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patch'd, gives way
To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day:
Here, on a matted flock, with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head;
For him no hand the cordial cup applies,
Or wipes the tear that stagnates in his eyes;
No friends with soft discourse his pain beguile,
Or promise hope, till sickness wears a smile.

But soon a loud and hasty summons calls,
Shakes the thin roof, and echoes round the walls;
Anon, a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit;
With looks unalter'd by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go,
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries fate and physic in his eye:
A potent quack, long versed in human ills,
Who first insults the victim whom he kills;
Whose murd'rous hand a drowsy Bench protect,
And whose most tender mercy is neglect.

Paid by the parish for attendance here,
He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer;
In haste he seeks the bed where Misery lies,
Impatience mark'd in his averted eyes;
And, some habitual queries hurried o'er,
Without reply, he rushes on the door:
His drooping patient, long inured to pain,
And long unheeded, knows remonstance vain;
He ceases now the feeble help to crave
Of man; and silent sinks into the grave.[21]

But ere his death some pious doubts arise,
Some simple fears, which "bold bad" men despise;
Fain would he ask the parish priest to prove
His title certain to the joys above:

[18] [Original MS.:—
Slow in their gifts, but hasty in their words.]

[19] [This description of the Parish Poor-house, and that of the Village Apothecary, lower down, were inserted by Burke in the Annual Register, and afterwards by Dr. Vicesimus Knox in the Elegant Extracts, along with the lines on the old romancers from "The Library." The effect produced by these specimens has been already illustrated by a letter from Sir W. Scott to Mr. Crabbe, written in 1809. See *antè*, p. 53. The poet Wordsworth, on reading that letter, has said:—"I first became acquainted with Mr. Crabbe's works in the same way, and about the same time, as did Sir Walter Scott, as appears from his letter; and the extracts made such an impression upon me, that *I* can also repeat them. The two lines,—

'The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot, and the madman gay,'—

struck my youthful feelings particularly; though facts, as far as they had then come under my knowledge, did not support the description; inasmuch as idiots and lunatics, among the humbler classes of society, were not to be found in workhouses, in the parts of the north where I was brought up, but were mostly at large, and too often the butt of thoughtless children. Any testimony from me to the merit of your revered father's works would, I feel, be superfluous, if not impertinent. They will last, from their combined merits as Poetry and Truth, full as long as anything that has been expressed in verse since they first made their appearance."—*Letter dated Feb.* 1834.]

[20] ["There is a truth and a force in these descriptions of rural life, which is calculated to sink deep into the memory; and, being confirmed by daily observation, they are recalled upon innumerable occasions, when the ideal pictures of more fanciful authors have lost all their interest. For ourselves at least, we profess to be indebted to Mr. Crabbe for many of these strong impressions; and have known more than one of our unpoetical acquaintances who declared they could never pass by a parish workhouse without thinking of the description of it they had read at school in the 'Poetical Extracts.'"—*Edinburgh Review*, 1807.

"The vulgar impression that Crabbe is throughout a gloomy author, we ascribe to the choice of certain specimens of his earliest poetry in the 'Elegant Extracts,'—the only specimens of him that had been at all generally known at the time when most of those who have criticised his later works were young. That exquisitely-finished, but heart-sickening description, in particular, of the poor-house in 'The Village,' fixed itself on every imagination; and when 'The Register' and 'Borough' came out, the reviewers, unconscious, perhaps, of the early prejudice that was influencing them, selected quotations mainly of the same class."—*Quarterly Review*, 1834.]

[21] ["The consequential apothecary, who gives an impatient attendance in these abodes of misery, is admirably described."—JEFFREY.]

For this he sends the murmuring nurse, who calls
The holy stranger to these dismal walls:
And doth not he, the pious man, appear,
He, "passing rich, with forty pounds a year?"[22]
Ah! no; a shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him, feeds this little flock:
A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task
As much as God or man can fairly ask;
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning, and to feasts the night;
None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chace, to cheer them or to chide;
A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,[23]
And, skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play:[24]
Then, while such honours bloom around his head,
Shall he sit sadly by the sick man's bed,
To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that e'en the pious feel?[25]
Now once again the gloomy scene explore,
Less gloomy now; the bitter hour is o'er,
The man of many sorrows sighs no more.—
Up yonder hill, behold how sadly slow
The bier moves winding from the vale below:
There lie the happy dead, from trouble free,
And the glad parish pays the frugal fee:
No more, O Death! thy victim starts to hear
Churchwarden stern, or kingly overseer;
No more the farmer claims his humble bow,
Thou art his lord, the best of tyrants thou!
Now to the church behold the mourners come,
Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb;
The village children now their games suspend,
To see the bier that bears their ancient friend:
For he was one in all their idle sport,
And like a monarch ruled their little court;
The pliant bow he form'd, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all;
Him now they follow to his grave, and stand,
Silent and sad, and gazing hand in hand;
While bending low, their eager eyes explore
The mingled relicts of the parish poor.
The bell tolls late, the moping owl flies round,
Fear marks the flight and magnifies the sound;
The busy priest, detain'd by weightier care,
Defers his duty till the day of prayer;[26]
And, waiting long, the crowd retire distrest,
To think a poor man's bones should lie unblest.[27]

[22] ["A man he was, to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year."
GOLDSMITH.]

[23] [Original Edition:—

Sure in his shot, his game he seldom mist,
And seldom fail'd to win his game at whist.]

[24] ["Mr. Crabbe told me, that when he first published his poem 'The Village,' the letters he received were innumerable from a particular class of religious readers, who were warm in commendation, most particularly of the lines,—

'Sure in his shot, his game he seldom mist,
And seldom fail'd to win his game at whist.'

The letters of remonstrance were as innumerable, when, in his poem, 'The Library,' the lines were read,—

'Calvin grows gentle on this silent coast,
Nor finds a single heretic to roast.'"—BOWLES.]

[25] ["Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,
A cassock'd huntsman, and a fiddling priest!
He takes the field. The master of the pack
Cries, 'Well done, saint!' and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss?
Himself a wand'rer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?"
COWPER.]

[26] Some apology is due for the insertion of a circumstance by no means common. That it has been a subject for complaint in any place, is a sufficient reason for its being reckoned among the evils which may happen to the poor, and which must happen to them exclusively; nevertheless, it is just to remark, that such neglect is very rare in any part of the kingdom, and in many parts is totally unknown.

[27] ["In this part of the poem there is a great deal of painting that is truly characteristic; and had not that indispensable rule, which both painters and poets should equally attend to, been reversed, namely, to form their individuals from ideas of general nature, it would have been unexceptionable."—*Monthly Rev.* 1783.]

BOOK II.

There are found, amid the Evils of a laborious Life, some Views of Tranquillity and Happiness—The Repose and Pleasure of a Summer Sabbath: interrupted by Intoxication and Dispute—Village Detraction—Complaints of the 'Squire—The Evening Riots—Justice—Reasons for this unpleasant View of Rustic *Life*: the Effect it should have upon the Lower Classes; and the Higher—These last have their peculiar Distresses: Exemplified in the Life and heroic Death of Lord Robert Manners—Concluding Address to His Grace the Duke of Rutland.

No longer truth, though shown in verse, disdain,
But own the Village Life a life of pain:
I too must yield, that oft amid those woes
Are gleams of transient mirth and hours of sweet repose,
Such as you find on yonder sportive Green,
The 'squire's tall gate and churchway-walk between;
Where loitering stray a little tribe of friends,
On a fair Sunday when the sermon ends:
Then rural beaux their best attire put on,
To win their nymphs, as other nymphs are won:
While those long wed go plain, and by degrees,
Like other husbands, quit their care to please.
Some of the sermon talk, a sober crowd,
And loudly praise, if it were preach'd aloud;
Some on the labours of the week look round,
Feel their own worth, and think their toil renown'd;
While some, whose hopes to no renown extend,
Are only pleased to find their labours end.
Thus, as their hours glide on, with pleasure fraught
Their careful masters brood the painful thought;
Much in their mind they murmur and lament,
That one fair day should be so idly spent;
And think that Heaven deals hard, to tithe their store
And tax their time for preachers and the poor.
Yet still, ye humbler friends, enjoy your hour,
This is your portion, yet unclaim'd of power;
This is Heaven's gift to weary men oppress'd,
And seems the type of their expected rest:
But yours, alas! are joys that soon decay;
Frail joys, begun and ended with the day;

Or yet, while day permits those joys to reign,
The village vices drive them from the plain.
See the stout churl, in drunken fury great,
Strike the bare bosom of his teeming mate!
His naked vices, rude and unrefined,
Exert their open empire o'er the mind;
But can we less the senseless rage despise,
Because the savage acts without disguise?
Yet here Disguise, the city's vice, is seen,
And Slander steals along and taints the Green:
At her approach domestic peace is gone,
Domestic broils at her approach come on;
She to the wife the husband's crime conveys,
She tells the husband when his consort strays;
Her busy tongue, through all the little state,
Diffuses doubt, suspicion, and debate;
Peace, tim'rous goddess! quits her old domain,
In sentiment and song content to reign.
Nor are the nymphs that breathe the rural air
So fair as Cynthia's, nor so chaste as fair:
These to the town afford each freshier face,
And the clown's trull receives the peer's embrace;
From whom, should chance again convey her down,
The peer's disease in turn attacks the clown.
Here too the 'squire, or 'squire-like farmer, talk,
How round their regions nightly pilferers walk;
How from their ponds the fish are borne, and all
The rip'ning treasures from their lofty wall;
How meaner rivals in their sports delight,
Just right enough to claim a doubtful right;[1]
Who take a licence round their fields to stray,
A mongrel race! the poachers of the day.
And hark! the riots of the Green begin,
That sprang at first from yonder noisy inn;
What time the weekly pay was vanish'd all,
And the slow hostess scored the threat'ning wall;
What time they ask'd, their friendly feast to close,
A final cup, and that will make them foes;
When blows ensue that break the arm of toil,
And rustic battle ends the boobies' broil.
Save when to yonder Hall they bend their way,
Where the grave Justice ends the grievous fray;
He who recites, to keep the poor in awe,
The law's vast volume—for he knows the law:—
To him with anger or with shame repair
The injured peasant and deluded fair.
Lo! at his throne the silent nymph appears,
Frail by her shape, but modest in her tears;
And while she stands abash'd, with conscious eye,
Some favourite female of her judge glides by,
Who views with scornful glance the strumpet's fate,
And thanks the stars that made her keeper great:
Near her the swain, about to bear for life
One certain evil, doubts 'twixt war and wife;
But, while the faltering damsel takes her oath,
Consents to wed, and so secures them both.
Yet why, you ask, these humble crimes relate,
Why make the Poor as guilty as the Great?
To show the great, those mightier sons of pride,
How near in vice the lowest are allied;
Such are their natures and their passions such,
But these disguise too little, those too much:[2]
So shall the man of power and pleasure see
In his own slave as vile a wretch as he;
In his luxurious lord the servant find
His own low pleasures and degenerate mind:
And each in all the kindred vices trace,
Of a poor, blind, bewilder'd erring race,
Who, a short time in varied fortune past,
Die, and are equal in the dust at last.[3]
And you, ye Poor, who still lament your fate,
Forbear to envy those you call the Great;
And know, amid those blessings they possess,
They are, like you, the victims of distress;
While Sloth with many a pang torments her slave,
Fear waits on guilt, and Danger shakes the brave.
Oh! if in life one noble chief appears,
Great in his name, while blooming in his years;
Born to enjoy whate'er delights mankind,
And yet to all you feel or fear resign'd;
Who gave up joys and hopes to you unknown,
For pains and dangers greater than your own:
If such there be, then let your murmurs cease,
Think, think of him, and take your lot in peace.
And such there was:—Oh! grief, that checks our pride,
Weeping we say there was,—for MANNERS died:
Beloved of Heaven, these humble lines forgive,
That sing of Thee,[4] and thus aspire to live.

[1] [Original MS.:—
How their maids languish, while their men run loose,
And leave them scarce a damsel to seduce.]

[2] ["It is good for the proprietor of an estate to know that such things are, and at his own doors. He might have guessed, indeed, as a general truth, even whilst moving in his own exclusive sphere, that many a story of intense interest might be supplied by the annals of his parish. Crabbe would have taught him thus much, had he been a reader of that most sagacious of observers, most searching of moral anatomists, most graphic of poets; and we reverence this great writer not less for his genius than for his patriotism, in bravely lifting up the veil which is spread between the upper classes and the working-day world, and letting one half of mankind know what the other is about. This effect alone gives a dignity to his poetry, which poems constructed after a more Arcadian model would never have in our eyes, however pleasingly they may babble of green fields. But such wholesome incidents reach the ears of the landlord in his own particular case, most commonly through the clergyman's—they fall rather within his department than another's—they lie upon his beat—through *his* representations the sympathies of the landlord are profitably drawn out, and judiciously directed to the individual—and another thread is added to those cords of a man, by which the owner and occupant of the soil are knit together, and society is interlaced."—*Quarterly Review*, 1833.]

[3] ["A rich man, what is he? Has he a frame
Distinct from others? or a better name?
Has he more legs, more arms, more eyes, more brains?
Has he less care, less crosses, or less pains?
Can riches keep the mortal wretch from death?
Or can new treasures purchase a new breath?
Or does Heaven send its love and mercy more
To Mammon's pamper'd sons than to the poor?
If not, why should the *fool* take so much state,
Exalt himself, and *others* under-rate?
'Tis senseless ignorance that soothes his pride,
And makes him laugh at all the world beside;
But when excesses bring on gout or stone,
All his vain mirth and gaiety are gone:
And when he dies, for all he looks so high,
He 'll make as vile a skeleton as I."—TOM BROWNE.]

[4] Lord Robert Manners, the youngest son of the Marquess of Granby and the Lady Frances Seymour, daughter of Charles duke of Somerset, was born on the 5th of February, 1758; and was placed with his brother, the late duke of Rutland, at Eton School, where he acquired, and ever after retained, a considerable knowledge of the classical authors

As the tall oak, whose vigorous branches form
An ample shade and brave the wildest storm,
High o'er the subject wood is seen to grow,
The guard and glory of the trees below;
Till on its head the fiery bolt descends,
And o'er the plain the shattered trunk extends;
Yet then it lies, all wond'rous as before,
And still the glory, though the guard no more:
So THOU, when every virtue, every grace,
Rose in thy soul, or shone within thy face;
When, though the son of GRANBY,[5] thou wert known
Less by thy father's glory than thy own;
When Honour loved and gave thee every charm,
Fire to thy eye and vigour to thy arm;
Then from our lofty hopes and longing eyes,
Fate and thy virtues call'd thee to the skies;
Yet still we wonder at thy tow'ring fame,
And, losing thee, still dwell upon thy name.
Oh! ever honour'd, ever valued! say,
What verse can praise thee, or what work repay?
Yet verse (in all we can) thy worth repays,
Nor trusts the tardy zeal of future days:—
Honours for thee thy country shall prepare,
Thee in their hearts, the good, the brave shall bear;
To deeds like thine shall noblest chiefs aspire,
The Muse shall mourn thee, and the world admire.
In future times, when smit with Glory's charms,
The untried youth first quits a father's arms;—
"Oh! be like him," the weeping sire shall say;
"Like MANNERS walk, who walk'd in Honour's way;
"In danger foremost, yet in death sedate,
"Oh! be like him in all things, but his fate!"
If for that fate such public tears be shed,
That Victory seems to die now THOU art dead;
How shall a friend his nearer hope resign,
That friend a brother, and whose soul was thine?
By what bold lines shall we his grief express,
Or by what soothing numbers make it less?
'Tis not, I know, the chiming of a song,
Nor all the powers that to the Muse belong,
Words aptly cull'd, and meanings well express'd,
Can calm the sorrows of a wounded breast;
But Virtue, soother of the fiercest pains,
Shall heal that bosom, RUTLAND, where she reigns.[6]

Yet hard the task to heal the bleeding heart,
To bid the still-recurring thoughts depart,
Tame the fierce grief and stem the rising sigh,
And curb rebellious passion, with reply;
Calmly to dwell on all that pleased before,
And yet to know that all shall please no more;—
Oh! glorious labour of the soul, to save
Her captive powers, and bravely mourn the brave.
To such these thoughts will lasting comfort give—
Life is not measured by the time we live:
'Tis not an even course of threescore years,—
A life of narrow views and paltry fears,
Grey hairs and wrinkles and the cares they bring,
That take from Death the terrors or the sting;
But 'tis the gen'rous spirit, mounting high
Above the world, that native of the sky;
The noble spirit, that, in dangers brave
Calmly looks on, or looks beyond the grave:—
Such MANNERS was, so he resign'd his breath,
If in a glorious, then a timely death.
Cease then that grief, and let those tears subside;
If Passion rule us, be that passion pride;
If Reason, reason bids us strive to raise
Our fallen hearts, and be like him we praise;
Or if Affection still the soul subdue,
Bring all his virtues, all his worth in view,
And let Affection find its comfort too:
For how can Grief so deeply wound the heart,
When Admiration claims so large a part?
Grief is a foe—expel him then thy soul,
Let nobler thoughts the nearer views control!
Oh! make the age to come thy better care,
See other RUTLANDS, other GRANBYS there!
And, as thy thoughts through streaming ages glide,
See other heroes die as MANNERS died:[7]
And from their fate, thy race shall nobler grow,
As trees shoot upwards that are pruned below:
Or as old Thames, borne down with decent pride,
Sees his young streams run warbling at his side;
Though some, by art cut off, no longer run,
And some are lost beneath the summer sun—
Yet the pure stream moves on, and, as it moves,
Its power increases and its use improves;
While plenty round its spacious waves bestow,
Still it flows on, and shall for ever flow.[8]

Lord Robert, after going through the duties of his profession on board different ships, was made captain of the Resolution, and commanded her in nine different actions, besides the last memorable one on the 12th of April, 1782, when, in breaking the French line of battle, he received the wounds which terminated his life, in the twenty-fourth year of his age. See the Annual Register.—[This article in the Annual Register was written by Mr. Crabbe, and is now reprinted as an Appendix to "The Village."]

[5] [John, Marquess of Granby, the illustrious commander-in-chief of the British forces in Germany during the Seven Years' War, died in 1770, before his father, the thirteenth Earl and third Duke of Rutland.]

[6] [Original MS.:—
But RUTLAND's virtues shall his griefs restrain,
And join to heal the bosom where they reign.
See some anecdotes illustrative of the Duke's tender affection for his gallant brother, *ante*, p. 33.]

[7] [Original edition:—
Victims victorious, who with him shall stand
In Fame's fair book, the guardians of the land.]

[8] ["It has been objected to the pastoral muse, that her principal employment is to delineate scenes that never existed, and to cheat the imagination by descriptions of pleasure that never can be enjoyed. Sensible of her deviation from nature and propriety, the author of the present poem has endeavoured to bring her back into the sober paths of truth and reality. It is not, however, improbable that he may have erred as much as those whom he condemns. For it may be questioned, whether he who represents a peasant's life as a life of unremitting labour and remediless anxiety; who describes his best years as embittered by insult and oppression, and his old age as squalid, comfortless, and destitute, gives a juster representation of rural enjoyments than they who, running into a contrary extreme, paint the face of the country as wearing a perpetual smile, and its inhabitants as passing away their hours in uninterrupted pleasure and unvaried tranquillity."—*Monthly Rev.* 1783.
"'The Village' is a very classical composition. It seems designed as a contrast to Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village' in one point of view; that is, so far as Goldsmith expatiates on the felicities and inconveniences of rural life. The author of 'The Village' takes the dark side of the question: he paints all with a sombre pencil; too justly, perhaps, but, to me at least, unpleasingly. We know there is no unmixed happiness in any state of life; but one does not wish to be perpetually told so."—SCOTT *of Amwell, Letter to Dr. Beattie, Aug.* 1783.]

APPENDIX.

FROM THE ANNUAL REGISTER FOR 1783. See *antè*, p. 27.

CHARACTER OF LORD ROBERT MANNERS, LATE COMMANDER OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP THE RESOLUTION, OF SEVENTY-FOUR GUNS. [WRITTEN BY MR. CRABBE.]

IN a country, like this, which has long laboured under the calamities of war, it is but natural to look back upon the events by which it was terminated, and to make some inquiry after those to whom we are indebted for the return of peace; and this not with the view of informing ourselves whether the conditions by which it was obtained were or were not adequate to our situation, but with a grateful remembrance of those without whose signal courage and vigorous exertions we might not have been able to have insisted on any conditions whatsoever.

The victory gained by the British fleet, on the 12th of April, 1782, was unquestionably of the greatest importance to this kingdom, and in the highest degree contributed to our present repose: those brave men, therefore, who then fell in the service of their country, claim our most grateful remembrance, and all the honourable testimony which the living can pay to departed worth.

Among these was Lord Robert Manners; a young nobleman, remarkable for his military genius, and the many excellent endowments both of his person and mind. In the following pages, it is my design to lay before the public some anecdotes of this heroic young commander, who fell in their service; sacrificing the ease of his former situation, the indulgences of a splendid fortune, and the pleasures of private society, to the dangers of a perilous element, and the honourable hazards of a military life.

Lord Robert Manners was the youngest son of the late Marquis of Granby, by the Lady Frances Seymour, daughter of Charles Duke of Somerset. He was born on the 5th of February, 1758, and placed with his brother, the present Duke of Rutland, at Eton school; in which great seminary of education he acquired a competent knowledge of the classic authors, for which he ever after retained an excellent taste, and bestowed many hours in the perusal of their most admired compositions. His mind, however, was found to be active, vigorous, and enterprising, and his genius evidently military: his entreaties, when he was fourteen years old, prevailed over the apprehensions of his grandfather, the late Duke of Rutland, and obtained his permission to enter upon his profession in the navy —giving that the preference to the land service, to which he might be conceived to have had an hereditary bias, as his father so long commanded the army of Great Britain, with singular reputation.

So early a dedication of himself to the severity of naval discipline, and so full a resignation of all the pleasures which his age and rank might have led him to expect, in places where he was admired for his accomplishments and beloved for his disposition, is of itself a subject of no inferior praise, and ought to be distinguished from the reluctant compliance of those who are called into danger by the urgency of their circumstances or the importunity of their friends: this alone might secure him from the oblivion which waits upon the many millions who, in every century, take their turns upon this stage of human life, and depart undistinguished by the performance of any actions eminently great or good.

The first three voyages of Lord Robert were made to Newfoundland, with Lord Schuldham, to whose care he was committed, and under whom he served as a midshipman; after which, he went in the same capacity to the Mediterranean, in a frigate, and visited many of the different courts of Italy: on his return to England, he was appointed lieutenant on board the Ocean, a ninety-gun ship, commanded by Captain Lafory, in which rank he was present at the action of the 27th of July, off Ushant, under Admiral Keppel, who, a few days after the action, took him to his own ship.

His next appointment was to a lieutenancy on board the Alcide, in which he served in the action off Gibraltar, when Lord Rodney gained a complete victory over the Spanish fleet, commanded by Don Juan de Langara; and, immediately after this, Lord Robert was appointed Captain of the Resolution, which ship he commanded in nine separate actions, before that glorious but fatal one which put a period to his life.

There is perhaps but little to be gathered from this account of his various promotions, and the steps of an almost certain advancement, in the line of his profession; but it is necessary to remark, what all with whom he sailed are unanimous in declaring, that Lord Robert was equally excellent, if not equally conspicuous, in the inferior stations, as in the more exalted: a continual attention to his duty, joined with a real knowledge of the service, were his claims to promotion; and a constant care and precision in the discharge of his subordinate stations, were the great causes of his speedy progress to the rank of a commander.

Lord Robert, in his return from Gibraltar, in the Resolution, engaged and took the Prothée, a French line-of-battle ship, going to the East Indies: the Resolution was then ordered to America, and continued there till Lord Rodney sent for her to the West Indies: at St. Eustatius, the Mars, a Dutch frigate, struck to the Resolution; after which, she was detached, with the squadron under Lord Hood, to cruise off Martinique.

Some time after this, in an engagement between Admiral Greaves and the French fleet off Martinique, on a confusion of signals, which prevented the rear of our fleet coming to action, Lord Robert broke the line of battle, bore his ship into the centre of the enemy, and so narrowly escaped in this dangerous attempt, that a part of his hat was struck off by a grape-shot.

In one of the three engagements off St. Kitt's (in all which he was eminently distinguished), he, together with Captain Cornwallis, supported the commander of his division, Commodore Affleck,

with such unshaken fortitude and perseverance, that those three ships beat off the whole French fleet, and protected the rest of their own:—a circumstance which Lord Hood mentions, in his letter to the Admiralty, with high terms of eulogium.

His last action was that memorable one on the 12th of April, when the Resolution engaged very desperately nine or ten of the enemy, in breaking through their line, which she did, the third ship to the admiral. It was in this attempt that Lord Robert had both his legs shattered, and his right arm broken at the same instant, the former by a cannon shot, and the latter by a splinter: his mind, however, remained unsubdued; for neither at that nor at any future period, neither when he was under the most painful operations, nor when he became sensible of his approaching fate, did he betray one symptom of fear or regret:

"Non laudis Amor nec Gloriæ cessit
Pulsa metu"——

It was with great reluctance he suffered himself to be carried to the surgeon's apartment, and he objected to the amputation of his leg, because he had conceived it would prevent his continuance on board his ship; but being assured to the contrary, his objections ceased, and he permitted the surgeon to proceed. At this time all his thoughts and inquiries were directed to the event of the day; which being soon after announced to him, every consideration of his own misfortune was suspended, and he both felt and expressed the greatest joy and exultation in a victory so important to his country, and so fatal to himself.

Being persuaded to return to England, he was removed on board the Andromache frigate; but before he quitted the Resolution, he ordered every man whose good conduct had been remarkable during his command, to come into his cabin, where he thanked him for his attention to his duty, and gave each a present of money, as a token of his particular regard. On his leaving his ship, he asked whether the colours of those which had struck to the Resolution, during his command, were in his baggage; but suddenly recollecting himself, and being conscious that his motives for the question might be imputed to vanity and ostentation, he begged leave to retract it, hoping that an idea so weak would be buried in oblivion. It was natural for a young hero to make such an inquiry, and his reflection on having made it would have done honour to the oldest.

Lord Robert's behaviour, during the short remainder of his life, was singularly great: his conversation was cheerful, and his mind serene; his fortitude never forsook him; he betrayed no signs of impatience, nor suffered his resignation to be broken by ineffectual wishes or melancholy regret; these he left to his survivors, who deeply feel them; he had given himself to the service of his country, and forbore to indulge any fruitless expectations of living, when the purposes of life were completed, and the measure of his glory filled up. His attention to the lives of his seamen had made him previously acquainted with the nature of his own case, and the fatal symptoms that so frequently follow: before these appeared, he was busied in planning future regulations and improvements on board his ship; and afterwards, he himself first acquainted his surgeon with their appearance. He prepared for his approaching fate with the utmost calmness and composure of mind; and having settled his worldly affairs with his accustomed regularity and despatch, he ended a life of glory with resignation and prayer.

So fell this brave young nobleman, on the 24th day of April, 1782; having, at the age of twenty-four years, served his country in eleven general actions:—

"Ostendent terris hunc tantum Fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent"—— VIRGIL.

His eulogium was loudly uttered in the grief and lamentation of the whole navy: victory appeared too dearly bought, while they considered the price which was paid for it; and, indeed, such was the attention of this nobleman to the welfare of his seamen, as well as to the order and regularity of the fleet; such was his skill to find out, and resolution to reform abuses, that the loss of such a commander may be regretted, when the victory in which he fell shall cease to be mentioned.

The person of Lord Robert Manners was worthy of such a mind: he was tall and graceful, strong and active; his features were regular, and his countenance beautiful, without effeminacy; his eyes were large, dark, and most expressive; his complexion inclined to brown, with much colour, which remained unimpaired by the West India climate; indeed, his whole appearance commanded love and respect, and was a strong indication of superior merit.

Lord Robert possessed, in an eminent degree, the happy art of gaining the affections of his men, while he preserved the strictest discipline among them; nor is this his greatest praise; for, while he was admired by the officers of every rank, for his affability and engaging deportment, he was trusted by the highest in command, and consulted by many, who judged his great skill and attention, in the line of his profession, more than balanced their longer experience.

The bravery of Lord Robert was accompanied by a disposition tender and merciful: his obligations to use severity were punishments to himself; and he was always unhappy in feeling the necessity of bestowing correction; yet his lenity was always judicious, and seldom ineffectual: he had once the opportunity of pronouncing pardon on thirteen offenders (who were a part of sixty-four condemned in several ships for mutiny); on which occasion his feelings overcame his power of utterance: he began with representing to them (who were ignorant of the intended grace) the nature of their crime, and the punishment due to it; but when he came to speak of the offered mercy, he partook of their sensations, and could only deliver it by bursting into tears. It is but just to remark, that these men were truly sensible of the worth of such a commander, and were afterwards conspicuous for their good behaviour among the best seamen of the navy.

Lord Robert, however he possessed the virtue, was without the weakness of a tender disposition: he was grave, prudent, and reserved, never speaking his opinion but upon sure grounds, and then at

proper times, in the company of his select friends, or when truth and justice called upon him to rescue an action or a character from suspicion or reproach; yet his reserve was not of that kind which damped his love for society; he was of a convivial turn, generous, condescending, and benevolent; emulating the humanity, as well as bravery, of his father and his father's house.

His chief study was that of his profession, in which he read and perfectly understood the most approved authors, not neglecting other kinds of reading, in some of which he was peculiarly and wonderfully versed; some, indeed, which might be thought foreign to his pursuits, if any can be so thought, to the vigorous and comprehensive mind which he possessed: in short, he seemed to be deficient in no qualification which might render him the best private friend, and one of the greatest and ablest officers this or any other country has produced.

To crown all his virtues, he had that of unaffected diffidence; being perfectly modest in his opinion of himself, and an enemy to all ostentation: he never listened to his own praise, but either forbad any to speak of the honour he so well deserved, or withdrew from the applause which he could not suppress. This disposition continued to the last, when he conversed with the same unaffected ease; and, wishing to write to a friend, he made use of his left hand, and gave him an account of his situation, in terms brief, easy, and affecting, because most unaffected, discovering the greatest magnanimity of soul, by not taking any pains to have it discovered by others.

Nor is this eulogium to be considered as proceeding from any partial regard or prepossession: the testimony of public gratitude, which was voted in the House of Commons, is a sufficient proof of the national sense of his merit; but the many private relations of his virtues, could they be universally diffused, would place him in a still stronger point of view: these are given by men whose testimony is voluntary and disinterested, whose experience could not be deceived, and whose eminence in their profession must entitle them to every degree of credit and attention.

Such is the character of Lord Robert Manners; and these anecdotes of him I have related from the best authority. Those who knew him, will, I am sure, think themselves indebted to me for the intention; and to those who did not, little apology will, I hope, be wanted, for making them acquainted with the worth of a brave and heroic young nobleman, who was an ornament to their country and died in its defence.

THE NEWSPAPER.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

EDWARD LORD THURLOW,

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN;[2] ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL, ETC., ETC.

My Lord,

My obligations to your Lordship, great as they are, have not induced me to prefix your name to the following poem: nor is it your Lordship's station, exalted as that is, which prevailed upon me to solicit the honour of your protection for it. But when I considered your Lordship's great abilities and good taste, so well known and so universally acknowledged, I became anxious for the privilege with which you have indulged me; well knowing that the Public would not be easily persuaded to disregard a performance marked, in any degree, with your Lordship's approbation.

It is, My Lord, the province of superior rank, in general, to bestow this kind of patronage; but superior talents only can render it valuable. Of the value of your Lordship's I am fully sensible; and, while I make my acknowledgments for that, and for many other favours, I cannot suppress the pride I have in thus publishing my gratitude, and declaring how much I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

Belvoir Castle, *February* 20, 1785.

most obliged, and devoted servant,

George Crabbe.

TO THE READER.

The Poem which I now offer to the public, is, I believe, the only one written on the subject; at least, it is the only one which I have any knowledge of: and, fearing there may not be found in it many things to engage the Reader's attention, I am willing to take the strongest hold I can upon him, by offering something which has the claim of novelty.

When the subject first occurred to me, I meant, in a few lines only, to give some description of that variety of dissociating articles which are huddled together in our Daily Papers. As the thought dwelt upon me, I conceived this might be done methodically, and with some connection of parts, by taking a larger scope; which notwithstanding I have done, I must still apologise for a want of union and coherence in my poem. Subjects like this will not easily admit of them: we cannot slide from

[1] [This poem was first published in a thin quarto, in March, 1785. The dedication to Lord Thurlow, the preface, and some of the author's foot-notes, omitted in the collection of 1807, are now restored from the original edition; which has also supplied several various readings. The obligations under which Mr. Crabbe had been laid by Lord Thurlow, previous to, and after, the publication of "The Newspaper," are detailed *anté*, pp. 32, 34. That the poet did not stoop to unworthy flattery, in the expressions he uses respecting the literary attainments of the Chancellor, is sufficiently proved by the high testimony of Bishop Horsley, in his Essay on the Prosody of the Greek and Latin Languages, and by the uniform warmth of the poet Cowper, when alluding to the splendid career of the great man who had been, in early life, his fellow-pupil in a Solicitor's chambers. See, in particular, the stanzas—

"Round Thurlow's head, in early youth,
And in his sportive days,
Fair Science pour'd the light of Truth,
And Genius shed his rays," &c.]

[2] Lord Thurlow was appointed Lord High Chancellor in 1778, and continued in the situation till 1783; when, upon the success of the Coalition ministry, he was ejected, and the seals put in commission; but, on the final triumph of Mr. Pitt, in 1784, he was reinstated, and possessed the seals till 1793. His Lordship died in 1806.]

theme to theme in an easy and graceful succession; but on quitting one thought, there will be an unavoidable hiatus, and in general an awkward transition into that which follows.

That, in writing upon the subject of our Newspapers, I have avoided everything which might appear like the opinion of a party, is to be accounted for from the knowledge I have gained from them; since, the more of these Instructors a man reads, the less he will infallibly understand: nor would it have been very consistent in me, at the same time to censure their temerity and ignorance, and to adopt their rage.

I should have been glad to have made some discrimination in my remarks on these productions. There is, indeed, some difference; and I have observed, that one editor will sometimes convey his abuse with more decency, and colour his falsehood with more appearance of probability, than another: but until I see that paper wherein no great character is wantonly abused, nor groundless insinuation wilfully disseminated, I shall not make any distinction in my remarks upon them.

It must, however, be confessed, that these things have their use; and are, besides, vehicles of much amusement: but this does not outweigh the evil they do to society, and the irreparable injury they bring upon the characters of individuals. In the following poem I have given those good properties their due weight: they have changed indignation into mirth, and turned what would otherwise have been abhorrence, into derision.

February, 1785.[2]

THE NEWSPAPER.

E quibus, hi vacuas implent sermonibus aures:
Hi narrata ferunt alio; mensuraque ficti
Crescit, et auditis aliquid novus adjicit auctor:
Illic Credulitas, illic temerarius Error,
Vanaque Lætitia est, consternatique Timores,
Seditioque repens, dubioque auctore Susurri.
OVID. *Metamorph.*, lib. xii.[4]

This not a Time favourable to poetical Composition: and why—Newspapers enemies to Literature, and their general Influence—Their Numbers—The Sunday Monitor—Their general Character—Their Effect upon Individuals—upon Society—in the Country—The Village Freeholder—What Kind of Composition a Newspaper is; and the Amusement it affords—Of what Parts it is chiefly composed—Articles of Intelligence: Advertisements: The Stage: Quacks: Puffing—The Correspondents to a Newspaper, political and poetical—Advice to the latter—Conclusion.

A TIME like this, a busy, bustling time,[5]
Suits ill with writers, very ill with rhyme:
Unheard we sing, when party-rage runs strong,
And mightier madness checks the flowing song:
Or, should we force the peaceful Muse to wield
Her feeble arms amid the furious field,
Where party-pens a wordy war maintain,
Poor is her anger, and her friendship vain;
And oft the foes who feel her sting, combine,
Till serious vengeance pays an idle line:
For party-poets are like wasps, who dart
Death to themselves, and to their foes but smart.
Hard then our fate: if general themes we choose,
Neglect awaits the song, and chills the Muse;
Or should we sing the subject of the day,
To-morrow's wonder puffs our praise away.
More blest the bards of that poetic time,
When all found readers who could find a rhyme;[6]
Green grew the bays on every teeming head,
And Cibber was enthroned,[7] and Settle[8] read.
Sing, drooping Muse, the cause of thy decline;
Why reign no more the once-triumphant Nine?
Alas! new charms the wavering many gain,
And rival sheets the reader's eye detain;

[3] [At this period party-spirit ran unusually high. The Coalition ministry, of which Mr. Burke was a member, had recently been removed—the India bills both of Fox and Pitt had been thrown out, and the public mind was greatly inflamed by the events of the six weeks' Westminster election, and the consequent scrutiny. Notwithstanding the philosophical tone of his preface, it seems highly probable that Mr. Crabbe had been moved to take up the subject by the indignation he felt on seeing Mr. Burke daily abused, at "this busy, bustling time," by one set of party writers, while the Duke of Rutland was equally the victim of another. Mr. Burke had, at this time, become extremely unpopular, both in and out of the House. At the opening of the new parliament, in May, 1784, so strong was the combination against him, that the moment of his rising became a *signal* for coughings, or other symptoms of pointed dislike. On one occasion he stopped short in his argument to remark, that "he could teach a pack of hounds to yelp with more melody and equal comprehension."]

[4] ["The courts are fill'd with a tumultuous din
Of crowds, or issuing forth, or entering in
A thoroughfare of News: where some devise
Things never heard, some mingle truth with lies;
The troubled air with empty sounds they beat,
Intent to hear, and eager to repeat.
Error sits brooding there, with added train
Of vain Credulity, and Joy as vain:
Suspicion, with Sedition joined, are near,
And Rumours raised, and Murmurs mix'd, and Fear."
DRYDEN.]

[5] The greatest part of this poem was written immediately after the dissolution of the late parliament.—[The parliament was dissolved in March, 1784. See *ante*, note 3.]

[6] ["Happy the soil where bards like mushrooms rise,
And ask no culture but what Byshe supplies!"
GIFFORD.]

[7] [On the death of Eusden, in 1730, the laureateship was bestowed on Cibber. When, in 1743, Pope published a new edition of the Dunciad, he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-eminence as hero of the poem, and enthroned Cibber in his stead:—

"Know, Eusden thirsts no more for sack or praise;
He sleeps among the dull of ancient days:
Thou, Cibber, thou his laurel shalt support,
Folly, my son, has still a friend at court."]

[8] [A poetaster who made some noise in his day by the violence of his writings. For his factious audacity he was made

A daily swarm, that banish every Muse,
Come flying forth, and mortals call them NEWS:[9]
For these, unread, the noblest volumes lie;[10]
For these, in sheets unsoil'd, the Muses die;
Unbought, unblest, the virgin copies wait
In vain for fame, and sink, unseen, to fate.
Since, then, the Town forsakes us for our foes,
The smoothest numbers for the harshest prose;
Let us, with generous scorn, the taste deride,
And sing our rivals with a rival's pride.
Ye gentle poets, who so oft complain
That foul neglect is all your labours gain;
That pity only checks your growing spite
To erring man, and prompts you still to write;
That your choice works on humble stalls are laid,
Or vainly grace the windows of the trade;[11]
Be ye my friends, if friendship e'er can warm
Those rival bosoms whom the Muses charm;
Think of the common cause wherein we go,
Like gallant Greeks against the Trojan foe;
Nor let one peevish chief his leader blame,
Till, crown'd with conquest, we regain our fame;
And let us join our forces to subdue
This bold assuming but successful crew.

I sing of NEWS, and all those vapid sheets
The rattling hawker vends through gaping streets;[12]
Whate'er their name, whate'er the time they fly,
Damp from the press, to charm the reader's eye:
For soon as Morning dawns with roseate hue,
The HERALD of the morn arises too;
POST after POST succeeds, and, all day long,
GAZETTES and LEDGERS swarm, a noisy throng.
When evening comes, she comes with all her train
Of LEDGERS, CHRONICLES, and POSTS again,
Like bats, appearing, when the sun goes down,
From holes obscure and corners of the town.[13]
Of all these triflers, all like these, I write;
Oh! like my subject could my song delight,
The crowd at Lloyd's one poet's name should raise,
And all the Alley echo to his praise.
In shoals the hours their constant numbers bring,
Like insects waking to th' advancing spring;
Which take their rise from grubs obscene that lie
In shallow pools, or thence ascend the sky:
Such are these base ephemeras,[14] so born
To die before the next revolving morn.
Yet thus they differ: insect-tribes are lost
In the first visit of a winter's frost;
While these remain, a base but constant breed,
Whose swarming sons their short-lived sires succeed;
No changing season makes their number less,
Nor Sunday shines a sabbath on the press![15]
Then lo! the sainted MONITOR is born,
Whose pious face some sacred texts adorn:[16]
As artful sinners cloak the secret sin,
To veil with seeming grace the guile within;
So Moral Essays on his front appear,
But all is carnal business in the rear;
The fresh-coin'd lie, the secret whisper'd last,
And all the gleanings of the six days past.
With these retired, through half the Sabbath-day,
The London lounger yawns his hours away:
Not so, my little flock! your preacher fly,
Nor waste the time no worldly wealth can buy;
But let the decent maid and sober clown
Pray for these idlers of the sinful town:

the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the mayor's day. "Of these bards," says Dr. Johnson, "he was the last, and seems not to have deserved even this degree of regard; for he afterwards wrote a panegyric on the virtues of Judge Jeffreys." He died, in 1723, a pensioner in the Charter-house.]

[9] ["Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas, Gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli."—JUVENAL.

"Whate'er the busy bustling world employs,
Our wants and wishes, pleasures, cares, and joys,
These the historians of our times display,
And call it NEWS—the hodge-podge of a day."
BONNEL THORNTON.]

[10] ["How do I laugh when men of narrow souls,
Whom Folly guides, and Prejudice controls;
Who, form'd to dullness from their very youth,
Lies of the day prefer to Gospel truth,
Pick up their little knowledge from Reviews,
And lay up all their stock of faith in News,
Rail at all liberal arts, deem verse a crime,
And hold not truth as truth, if told in rhyme."
CHURCHILL.]

[11] [Original edition:—

While your choice works on quiet shelves remain,
Or grace the windows of the trade in vain;
Where e'en their fair and comely sculptures fail,
Engraved by Grignion, and design'd by Wale.]

[12] ["We are indebted to the Italians for the idea of newspapers. The title of their Gazettas was, perhaps, derived from Gazzera, a magpie or chatterer; or, more probably, from a farthing coin, peculiar to the city of Venice, called Gazetta, which was the common price of the papers. Newspapers, then, took their birth in that principal land of modern politicians, Italy, and under the government of that aristocratical republic. The first paper was a Venetian one, and only monthly; but it was the newspaper of the government only. Other governments afterwards adopted the Venetian plan of a newspaper, with the Venetian name for it; and from one solitary government gazette, we see what an inundation of newspapers has burst upon us in this country."—D'ISRAELI.]

[13] ["Curiosity is the appetite of the mind: it must be satisfied, or we perish. Amongst the improvements, therefore, of modern times, there is none on which I find more reason to congratulate my countrymen, than the increase of knowledge by the multiplication of newspapers. With what a mixture of horror and commiseration do we now look back to that period of our history when a written letter came down once a week to the coffee-house, where a proper person, with a clear and strong voice, was pitched upon to read it aloud to the company assembled upon the occasion! How earnestly did they listen! How greedily did they suck down every drop of intelligence that fell within their reach! Happy the man that carried off but half a sentence! It was his employment for the rest of the evening, to imagine what the other half might have been. At present, the provision made for us is ample. There are morning papers for breakfast; there are evening papers for supper,—I beg pardon, I mean dinner; and, lest during the interval, wind should get into the stomach, there is a paper published, by way of luncheon, about noon."—BISHOP HORNE, 1787.]

[14] The ephemera, or May fly, is an insect remarked by naturalists for the very short time it lives after assuming its last and more perfect form.

[15] ["No place is sacred, not the church is free,
E'en Sunday shines no Sabbath day to me."—POPE.]

[16] [The original edition reads here:—

The OGLIO now appears, a rival name
Of bolder manners, though of younger fame.

The Oglio here alluded to was a Sunday print, of brief duration, which began in October, 1784.]

This day, at least, on nobler themes bestow,
Nor give to WOODFALL, or the world below.[17]

But, Sunday past, what numbers flourish then,
What wondrous labours of the press and pen;
Diurnal most, some thrice each week affords,
Some only once,—O avarice of words!
When thousand starving minds such manna seek,[18]
To drop the precious food but once a week.
Endless it were to sing the powers of all,
Their names, their numbers; how they rise and fall:
Like baneful herbs the gazer's eye they seize,
Rush to the head, and poison where they please:[19]
Like idle flies, a busy, buzzing train,
They drop their maggots in the trifler's brain:
That genial soil receives the fruitful store,
And there they grow, and breed a thousand more.[20]
Now be their arts display'd, how first they choose
A cause and party, as the bard his Muse;
Inspired by these, with clamorous zeal they cry,
And through the town their dreams and omens fly;
So the Sibylline leaves[21] were blown about,
Disjointed scraps of fate involved in doubt;
So idle dreams, the journals of the night,
Are right and wrong by turns, and mingle wrong with right.—
Some champions for the rights that prop the crown,
Some sturdy patriots, sworn to pull them down;
Some neutral powers, with secret forces fraught,
Wishing for war, but willing to be bought:
While some to every side and party go,
Shift every friend, and join with every foe;
Like sturdy rogues in privateers, they strike
This side and that, the foes of both alike;
A traitor-crew, who thrive in troubled times,
Fear'd for their force, and courted for their crimes.
Chief to the prosperous side the numbers sail,
Fickle and false, they veer with every gale;[22]
As birds that migrate from a freezing shore
In search of warmer climes, come skimming o'er,
Some bold adventurers first prepare to try
The doubtful sunshine of the distant sky;
But soon the growing Summer's certain sun
Wins more and more, till all at last are won:
So, on the early prospect of disgrace,
Fly in vast troops this apprehensive race;
Instinctive tribes! their failing food they dread,
And buy, with timely change, their future bread.[23]

Such are our guides; how many a peaceful head,
Born to be still, have they to wrangling led!
How many an honest zealot stol'n from trade,
And factious tools of pious pastors made!
With clews like these they thread the maze of state,
These oracles explore, to learn our fate;
Pleased with the guides who can so well deceive,
Who cannot lie so fast as they believe.

Oft lend I, loth, to some sage friend an ear,
(For we who will not speak are doom'd to hear);
While he, bewilder'd, tells his anxious thought,
Infectious fear from tainted scribblers caught,
Or idiot hope; for each his mind assails,
As LLOYD'S court-light[24] or STOCKDALE'S[25] gloom prevails.

[17] Henry Samson Woodfall, proprietor of the Public Advertiser, in which Junius appeared, was the author of a most important change in the character and influence of the newspaper press. In the conduct of his journal he was strictly impartial; and, notwithstanding the great popularity of Junius, by a reference to his papers of that day, it will be seen that as many essays were admitted on the ministerial side of the question as on that of the opposition. Mr. Woodfall was a man of high personal character: he died in 1805. See NICHOLS's *Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 301.]

[18] ["I sit in window, dry as ark,
And on the drowning world remark;
Or to some coffee-house I stray
For news—*the manna of the day*."—GREEN's *Spleen*.]

[19] ["If any read now-a-days, it is a play-book, or a pamphlet of news."—BURTON, 1614.]

[20] ["*Penny-boy, jun.* In truth they are dainty rooms; what place is this?
Cymbal. This is the outer room, where my clerks sit
And keep their sides, the Register in the midst;
The Examiner, he sits private there within;
And here I have my several rolls and files
Of news by the alphabet, and all put up
Under their heads.
P. jun. But those, too, subdivided?
Cymb. Into authentical and apocryphal—
Fitton. Or news of doubtful credit; as barbers' news—
Cymb. And tailors' news, porters', and watermen's news—
Fit. Whereto, besides the Coranti and Gazetti
Cymb. I have the news of the season.
Together with the names of special friends—
Fit. And men of correspondence in the country—
Cymb. Yes; of all ranks, and all religions—
Fit. Factors and agents—
Cymb. Liegers that lie out
Through all the shires of the kingdom.
P. jun. This is fine!
And bears a brave relation! But what says
Mercurius Britannicus to this?" &c. &c.—BEN JONSON's *Staple of News*, 1625; Gifford's edit. vol. v. p. 185.

"Pamphlets are the weekly almanacks, showing what weather is in the state, which, like the doves of Aleppo, carry news to every part of the kingdom. They are the silent traitors that affront majesty, and abuse all authority, under the colour of an imprimatur. Ubiquitary flies, that have, of late, so blistered the ears of all men, that they cannot endure any solid truth. The echoes, whereby what is done in every part of the kingdom is heard all over. They are like the mushrooms; spring up in a night, and dead in a day: and such is the greediness of man's nature (in these Athenian days) of news, that they will rather feign than want it."—T. FORD, 1647.]

[21] ["…..in foliis descripsit carmina Virgo;—
…..et teneres turbavit janua frondes."
VIRG. *Æn.* lib. iii.]

[22] [Original edition:—
Soon as the chiefs, whom once they choose, lie low,
Their praise too slackens, and their aid moves slow;
Not so when leagued with rising powers, their rage
Then wounds the unwary foe, and burns along the page.]

[23] [Original edition:—
Or are there those, who ne'er their friends forsook,
Lured by no promise, by no danger shook?
Then bolder bribes the venal aid procure,
And golden fetters make the faithless sure;
For those who deal in flattery or abuse,
Will sell them where they can the most produce.]

[24] [Lloyd's Evening Post—at this time a ministerial journal, published three times a week.]

[25] [Mr. Stockdale was, during the Coalition administration, an opposition bookseller.]

Yet stand I patient while but one declaims,
Or gives dull comments on the speech he maims:
But oh! ye Muses, keep your votary's feet
From tavern-haunts where politicians meet;
Where rector, doctor, and attorney pause,
First on each parish, then each public cause:
Indited roads, and rates that still increase;
The murmuring poor, who will not fast in peace;
Election zeal and friendship, since declined;
A tax commuted, or a tithe in kind;
The Dutch and Germans kindling into strife;
Dull port and poachers vile; the serious ills of life.
Here comes the neighbouring Justice, pleased to guide
His little club, and in the chair preside.
In private business his commands prevail,
On public themes his reasoning turns the scale;
Assenting silence soothes his happy ear,
And, in or out, his party triumphs here.

Nor here th' infectious rage for party stops,
But flits along from palaces to shops;
Our weekly journals o'er the land abound,
And spread their plague and influenzas round;
The village, too, the peaceful, pleasant plain,
Breeds the Whig farmer and the Tory swain;
Brookes' and St. Alban's[26] boasts not, but, instead,
Stares the Red Ram, and swings the Rodney's Head:—
Hither, with all a patriot's care, comes he
Who owns the little hut that makes him free;
Whose yearly forty shillings buy the smile
Of mightier men, and never waste the while;
Who feels his freehold's worth, and looks elate,
A little prop and pillar of the state.
Here he delights the weekly news to con,
And mingle comments as he blunders on;
To swallow all their varying authors teach,
To spell a title, and confound a speech:
Till with a muddled mind he quits the news,
And claims his nation's licence to abuse;
Then joins the cry, "That all the courtly race
"Are venal candidates for power and place;"[27]
Yet feels some joy, amid the general vice,
That his own vote will bring its wonted price.
These are the ills the teeming Press supplies,
The pois'nous springs from learning's fountain rise;

Not there the wise alone their entrance find,
Imparting useful light to mortals blind;
But, blind themselves, these erring guides hold out
Alluring lights to lead us far about;
Screen'd by such means, here Scandal whets her quill,
Here Slander shoots unseen, whene'er she will;
Here Fraud and Falsehood labour to deceive,
And Folly aids them both, impatient to believe.[28]

Such, sons of Britain! are the guides ye trust;
So wise their counsel, their reports so just!—
Yet, though we cannot call their morals pure,
Their judgment nice, or their decisions sure;
Merit they have to mightier works unknown,
A style, a manner, and a fate their own.
We, who for longer fame with labour strive,
Are pain'd to keep our sickly works alive;
Studious we toil, with patient care refine,
Nor let our love protect one languid line.[29]
Severe ourselves, at last our works appear,
When, ah! we find our readers more severe;
For, after all our care and pains, how few
Acquire applause, or keep it if they do!—
Not so these sheets, ordain'd to happier fate,
Praised through their day, and but that day their date;
Their careless authors only strive to join
As many words as make an even line;[30]
As many lines as fill a row complete;
As many rows as furnish up a sheet:
From side to side, with ready types they run,
The measure 's ended, and the work is done;
Oh, born with ease, how envied and how blest!
Your fate to-day and your to-morrow's rest.
To you all readers turn, and they can look
Pleased on a paper, who abhor a book;
Those who ne'er deign'd their Bible to peruse,
Would think it hard to be denied their News;
Sinners and saints, the wisest with the weak,
Here mingle tastes, and one amusement seek;
This, like the public inn, provides a treat,
Where each promiscuous guest sits down to eat;
And such this mental food, as we may call
Something to all men, and to some men all.[31]

Next, in what rare production shall we trace
Such various subjects in so small a space?

[26] [Brookes's club, in James's Street, still flourishes—the great rendezvous of Whig politicians. The St. Alban's club, an association of the same kind on the Tory side, was broken up when old St. Alban's Street was cleared away among other improvements in the west end of London.]

[27] [Original edition:—
Strive but for power, and parley but for place;
Yet hopes, good man! "that all may still be well,"
And thanks the stars he has a vote to sell:
While thus he reads or raves, around him wait
A rustic band, and join in each debate;
Partake his manly spirit, and delight
To praise or blame, to judge of wrong or right;
Measures to mend, and ministers to make,
Till all go madding for their country's sake.]

[28] ["The spirit of defamation, by which a newspaper is often possessed, has now found its own remedy in the diversity of them; for though a gentleman may read that he himself is a scoundrel and his wife no better than she should be to-day, he will be sure to read that both of them are very good sort of people to-morrow. In the same manner, if one paper, through mistake or design, kill his friend, there is another ready to fetch him to life; nay, if he have good luck in the order of his reading, he may be informed that his friend is alive again before he had perused the account of his death."—Bishop Horne.]

[29] [Original edition:—
Studious we toil, correct, amend, retouch,
Take much away, yet mostly leave too much.]

[30] "How many hours bring about the year?
How many days will furnish up the year?
How many years a mortal man may live!"
Shakspeare, *Henry* VI.

[31] ["How shall I speak thee, or thy pow'r address,
Thou God of our idolatry, the Press?
By thee religion, liberty, and laws,
Exert their influence, and advance their cause;
By thee, worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell,
Diffused, make earth the vestibule of hell;
Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise;
Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies;
Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee!

As the first ship upon the waters bore
Incongruous kinds who never met before;
Or as some curious virtuoso joins
In one small room, moths, minerals, and coins,
Birds, beasts, and fishes; nor refuses place
To serpents, toads, and all the reptile race;
So here, compress'd within a single sheet,
Great things and small, the mean and mighty meet.
'T is this which makes all Europe's business known,
Yet here a private man may place his own:
And, where he reads of Lords and Commons, he
May tell their honours that he sells rappee.
Add next th' amusement which the motley page
Affords to either sex and every age:
Lo! where it comes before the cheerful fire,—
Damps from the press in smoky curls aspire
(As from the earth the sun exhales the dew),
Ere we can read the wonders that ensue:
Then eager every eye surveys the part
That brings its favourite subject to the heart;
Grave politicians look for facts alone,
And gravely add conjectures of their own:
The sprightly nymph, who never broke her rest
For tottering crowns or mighty lands oppress'd,
Finds broils and battles, but neglects them all
For songs and suits, a birth-day, or a ball:
The keen warm man o'erlooks each idle tale
For "Monies wanted," and "Estates on Sale;" [32]
While some with equal minds to all attend,
Pleased with each part, and grieved to find an end.[33]

So charm the News; but we, who far from town
Wait till the postman [34] brings the packet down,
Once in the week, a vacant day behold,
And stay for tidings, till they 're three days old:
That day arrives; no welcome post appears,
But the dull morn a sullen aspect wears:
We meet, but ah! without our wonted smile,
To talk of headaches, and complain of bile;
Sullen we ponder o'er a dull repast,
Nor feast the body while the mind must fast.

A master-passion is the love of news,
Not music so commands, nor so the Muse:
Give poets claret, they grow idle soon;
Feed the musician, and he 's out of tune;
But the sick mind, of this disease possess'd,
Flies from all cure, and sickens when at rest.[35]

Now sing, my Muse, what various parts compose
These rival sheets of politics and prose.
First, from each brother's hoard a part they draw,
A mutual theft that never fear'd a law;
Whate'er they gain, to each man's portion fall,
And read it once, you read it through them all:
For this their runners ramble day and night,
To drag each lurking deed to open light;
For daily bread the dirty trade they ply,
Coin their fresh tales, and live upon the lie:
Like bees for honey, forth for news they spring,—
Industrious creatures! ever on the wing;
Home to their several cells they bear the store,
Cull'd of all kinds, then roam abroad for more.

No anxious virgin flies to "fair Tweed-side;"
No injured husband mourns his faithless bride;
No duel dooms the fiery youth to bleed;
But through the town transpires each ventrous deed.
Should some fair frail-one drive her prancing pair
Where rival peers contend to please the fair;
When, with new force, she aids her conquering eyes,
And beauty decks, with all that beauty buys:
Quickly we learn whose heart her influence feels,
Whose acres melt before her glowing wheels.
To these a thousand idle themes succeed,
Deeds of all kinds, and comments to each deed.
Here stocks, the state-barometers, we view,
That rise or fall by causes known to few; [36]
Promotion's ladder who goes up or down;
Who wed, or who seduced, amuse the town;
What new-born heir has made his father blest;
What heir exults, his father now at rest;
That ample list the Tyburn-herald gives,
And each known knave, who still for Tyburn lives.[37]

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,
Till half mankind were like himself possessed;
Philosophers, who darken and put out
Eternal truth by everlasting doubt;
Church quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discoverers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind;
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in these shallows all their spawn."—COWPER.]

[32] ["Whilst the sages are puffing off our distempers in one page of a newspaper, the auctioneers are puffing off our property in another. If this island of ours is to be credited for their description of it, it must pass for a terrestrial paradise: it makes an English ear tingle to hear of the boundless variety of lawns, groves, and parks; lakes, rivers, and rivulets; decorated farms and fruitful gardens; superb and matchless collections of pictures, jewels, plate, furniture, and equipages; town houses and country houses; hot-houses and ice-houses; observatories and conservatories; offices attached and detached; with all the numerous et-ceteras that glitter down the columns of our public prints. What is the harp of an Orpheus compared to the hammer of an auctioneer?"—CUMBERLAND.]

[33] [Original edition:—
While the sly widow, and the coxcomb sleek,
Dive deep for scandal through a hint oblique.]

[34] ["He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks;
News from all nations lumb'ring at his back,
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful; messenger of grief,
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some." &c.—COWPER.]

[35] [Original edition:—
Such restless passion is the love of News,
Worse than an itch for music or the Muse:
But the sick mind, of this disease possessed,
Has neither chance for cure nor intervals of rest.
Such powers have things so vile, and they can boast
That those peruse them who despise them most.]

[36] [Original edition:—
Such tales as these with joy the many read,
And paragraphs on paragraphs succeed;
Then add the common themes that never cease,
The tide-like stocks, their ebb and their increase.]

[37] ["From these daily registers, you may not only learn when anybody is married or hanged, but you have immediate notice whenever his grace goes to Newmarket, or her ladyship sets out for Bath; and, but last week, at the same time that the gentlemen of the law were told that the Lord Chancellor could not sit in the Court of Chancery, people of fashion had the melancholy news, that Signor Riccirelli was not able to sing. Nor is that part of the journal which is al-

So grows the work, and now the printer trics
His powers no more, but leans on his allies.

When lo! the advertising tribe succeed,
Pay to be read, yet find but few will read;
And chief th' illustrious race, whose drops and pills
Have patent powers to vanquish human ills:
These, with their cures, a constant aid remain,
To bless the pale composer's fertile brain;
Fertile it is, but still the noblest soil
Requires some pause, some intervals from toil;
And they at least a certain ease obtain
From Katterfelto's skill,[38] and Graham's glowing strain.[39]

I too must aid, and pay to see my name
Hung in these dirty avenues to fame;
Nor pay in vain, if aught the Muse has seen,
And sung, could make these avenues more clean;
Could stop one slander ere it found its way,
And gave to public scorn its helpless prey.
By the same aid, the Stage invites her friends,
And kindly tells the banquet she intends;
Thither from real life the many run,
With Siddons[40] weep, or laugh with Abingdon;[41]
Pleased in fictitious joy or grief, to see
The mimic passion with their own agree;
To steal a few enchanted hours away
From self, and drop the curtain on the day.
But who can steal from self that wretched wight
Whose darling work is tried, some fatal night?
Most wretched man! when, bane to every bliss,
He hears the serpent-critic's rising hiss;
Then groans succeed; nor traitors on the wheel
Can feel like him, or have such pangs to feel.
Nor end they here: next day he reads his fall
In every paper; critics are they all:
He sees his branded name with wild affright,
And hears again the cat-calls of the night.

Such help the STAGE affords: a larger space
Is fill'd by PUFFS and all the puffing race.
Physic had once alone the lofty style,
The well-known boast, that ceased to raise a smile:
Now all the province of that tribe invade,
And we abound in quacks of every trade.

The simple barber, once an honest name,
Cervantes founded, Fielding raised his fame:[42]
Barber no more—a gay perfumer comes,
On whose soft cheek his own cosmetic blooms;
Here he appears, each simple mind to move,
And advertises beauty, grace, and love.
" Come, faded belles, who would your youth renew,
" And learn the wonders of Olympian dew;
" Restore the roses that begin to faint,
" Nor think celestial washes vulgar paint;
" Your former features, airs, and arts assume,
" Circassian virtues, with Circassian bloom.
" Come, batter'd beaux, whose locks are turn'd to grey,
" And crop Discretion's lying badge away;
" Read where they vend these smart engaging things,
" These flaxen frontlets with elastic springs;
" No female eye the fair deception sees,
" Not Nature's self so natural as these."[43]

Such are their arts, but not confined to them,
The Muse impartial must her sons condemn:[44]
For they, degenerate! join the venal throng,
And puff a lazy Pegasus along:
More guilty these, by Nature less design'd
For little arts that suit the vulgar kind.
That barbers' boys, who would to trade advance,
Wish us to call them smart Friseurs from France;
That he who builds a chop-house, on his door
Paints " The true old original Blue Boar!"—

lotted to advertisements less amusing. Not only are the public transactions of auctioneers and horse-dealers, but the most private concerns of pleasure and gallantry carried on by their means. Assignations are here made, and the most secret intrigues formed, at the expense of two shillings. If a genteel young lady, who can do all kinds of work, wants a place, she will be sure to hear of a master by advertising. How many gentlemen have made open professions of the strictest honour and secrecy! And how many ladies dressed in such a manner, and seen at such a place, have been desired to leave a line for A. B.! The Daily Advertiser is, therefore, become the universal register for new faces."—BONNAL THORNTON.]

[38] ["The science of adorning and beautifying the human form seems to be systematically cultivated by many artists of all denominations. The professors of the cosmetic art offer innumerable pastes, washes, pommades, and perfumes, by which the ravages of time are prevented or counteracted. Even our public spectacles bespeak a degree of improvement hitherto unknown. Witness that wonderful wonder of all wonders, the brave soldier and learned doctor Katterfelto, whose courage and learning are only equalled by his honesty and love for this country, in remaining here unpensioned, notwithstanding the many offers from the Queen of France, the request of his friend and correspondent, Dr. Franklin, and the positive commands of the King of Prussia."—GROSE.]

[39] [Captain Grose says—"Highly eminent in the class of public exhibitors stands the learned Dr. Graham, whose philosophic researches and lectures, at the same time that they tend to improve our future progeny, and to make this kingdom the region of health and beauty, serve also to destroy that *mauvaise honte*, or timid bashfulness, so peculiar to the English ladies; for which he at least deserves the warmest acknowledgments from all parents and husbands." The beautiful creature, afterwards so well known as Lord Nelson's Lady Hamilton, used to personate the Goddess of Health at this empiric's indecent exhibitions.]

[40] [Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance on the London boards in 1775, retired from the stage in 1812, and died in 1831. See *antè*, p. 35.]

[41] [Mrs. Abingdon appeared on the stage in 1751, and died in 1815, at the age of eighty-four. For Mr. Crabbe's admiration of her acting, see *antè*, p. 35.]

[42] [See Don Quixote, and Tom Jones.]

[43] ["Cataracts of declamation thunder here;
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders lost,
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heav'n, earth, and ocean plunder'd of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feasts, and favourite airs,
Ethereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread."
COWPER.]

[44] [Original edition:—
Such are their puffs, and would they all were such;
Then should the verse no poet's laurel touch.]

These are the arts by which a thousand live,
Where Truth may smile, and Justice may forgive:—
But when, amidst this rabble rout, we find
A puffing poet to his honour blind:
Who slily drops quotations all about
Packet or post, and points their merit out;
Who advertises what reviewers say,
With sham editions every second day;
Who dares not trust his praises out of sight,
But hurries into fame with all his might;
Although the verse some transient praise obtains,
Contempt is all the anxious poet gains.

Now Puffs exhausted, Advertisements past,
Their Correspondents stand exposed at last;
These are a numerous tribe, to fame unknown,
Who for the public good forego their own;
Who volunteers in paper-war engage,
With double portion of their party's rage:
Such are the Bruti, Decii, who appear
Wooing the printer for admission here;
Whose generous souls can condescend to pray
For leave to throw their precious time away.

Oh! cruel Woodfall! when a patriot draws
His gray-goose quill in his dear country's cause,
To vex and maul a ministerial race,
Can thy stern soul refuse the champion place?
Alas! thou know'st not with what anxious heart
He longs his best-loved labours to impart;
How he has sent them to thy brethren round,
And still the same unkind reception found:
At length indignant will he damn the state,
Turn to his trade, and leave us to our fate.

These Roman souls, like Rome's great sons, are known
To live in cells on labours of their own.
Thus Milo, could we see the noble chief,
Feeds, for his country's good, on legs of beef:
Camillus copies deeds for sordid pay,
Yet fights the public battles twice a day
E'en now the godlike Brutus views his score
Scroll'd on the bar-board, swinging with the door:
Where, tippling punch, grave Cato's self you 'll see,
And *Amor Patriæ* vending smuggled tea.

Last in these ranks, and least, their art's disgrace,
Neglected stand the Muses' meanest race;
Scribblers who court contempt, whose verse the eye
Disdainful views, and glances swiftly by:
This Poet's Corner is the place they choose,
A fatal nursery for an infant Muse;
Unlike that Corner where true Poets lie,
These cannot live, and they shall never die;
Hapless the lad whose mind such dreams invade,
And win to verse the talents due to trade.

Curb then, O youth! these raptures as they rise,
Keep down the evil spirit and be wise;
Follow your calling, think the Muses foes,
Nor lean upon the pestle and compose.

I know your day-dreams, and I know the snare
Hid in your flow'ry path, and cry "Beware!"
Thoughtless of ill, and to the future blind,
A sudden couplet rushes on your mind;
Here you may nameless print your idle rhymes,
And read your first-born work a thousand times;
Th' infection spreads, your couplet grows apace,
Stanzas to Delia's dog or Celia's face: [45]
You take a name; Philander's odes are seen,
Printed, and praised, in every magazine:
Diarian sages greet their brother sage,
And your dark pages please th' enlighten'd age.—
Alas! what years you thus consume in vain,
Ruled by this wretched bias of the brain!

Go! to your desks and counters all return;
Your sonnets scatter, your acrostics burn;
Trade, and be rich; or, should your careful sires
Bequeath you wealth, indulge the nobler fires;
Should love of fame your youthful heart betray,
Pursue fair fame, but in a glorious way,
Nor in the idle scenes of Fancy's painting stray.
Of all the good that mortal men pursue,
The Muse has least to give, and gives to few;
Like some coquettish fair, she leads us on,
With smiles and hopes, till youth and peace are gone:
Then, wed for life, the restless wrangling pair
Forget how constant one, and one how fair:
Meanwhile, Ambition, like a blooming bride,
Brings power and wealth to grace her lover's side;
And though she smiles not with such flattering charms,
The brave will sooner win her to their arms.
Then wed to her, if Virtue tie the bands,
Go spread your country's fame in hostile lands;
Her court, her senate, or her arms adorn,
And let her foes lament that you were born:
Or weigh her laws, their ancient rights defend,
Though hosts oppose, be theirs and Reason's friend;
Arm'd with strong powers, in their defence engage,
And rise the Thurlow of the future age.[46]

[45] [See *antè*, p. 7. "He had," (says Mr. Crabbe, speaking of himself,) "with youthful indiscretion, written for publications wherein Damons and Delias began the correspondence that does not always end there, and where diffidence is nursed till it becomes presumption."]

[46] [On the first appearance of "The Newspaper," in 1785, the Critical Reviewers said, "Although this performance does not appear so highly finished as 'The Village,' it is certainly entitled to rank in the first class of modern productions;" and The Monthly Reviewers thus opened their critique:—"This poem is a satire on the newspapers of the present day, which are lashed by the author with much ingenuity. The versification is at once easy and forcible, and the rhymes are chaste and carefully chosen. Mr. Crabbe seems to have selected Pope as his model, and many passages are strongly marked imitations of the great poet. He has introduced the Alexandrine—we do not say the 'needless Alexandrine'—too frequently; a custom which prevails too much among modern poets. But still the poem has uncommon merit, and sufficiently evinces that the author is possessed of genius, taste, and imagination."

It may be observed, that, in 1784, the newspapers published in Great Britain and Ireland were only *seventy-nine*; now (1834), they amount to *nearly four hundred*.]

THE PARISH REGISTER.[1]

IN THREE PARTS.[2]

PART I.

Tum porro puer (ut sævis projectus ab undis,
Navita) nudus humi jacet infans indigus omni
Vitali auxilio, ——
Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum est,
Cui tantum in vitâ restat transire malorum.
LUCRET. *de Nat. Rerum*, lib. 5.[3]

The Village Register considered, as containing principally the Annals of the Poor—State of the Peasantry as meliorated by Frugality and Industry—The Cottage of an industrious Peasant; its Ornaments—Prints and Books—The Garden; its Satisfactions—The State of the Poor, when improvident and vicious—The Row or Street, and its Inhabitants—The Dwellings of one of these—A Public House—Garden and its Appendages—Gamesters; rustic Sharpers, &c.—Conclusion of the Introductory Part.

BAPTISMS.

The Child of the Miller's Daughter, and Relation of her Misfortune—A frugal Couple: their Kind of Frugality—Plea of the Mother of a natural Child: her Churching—Large Family of Gerard Ablett: his apprehensions: Comparison between his state and that of the wealthy Farmer his Master: his Consolation—An old Man's Anxiety for an Heir: the Jealousy of another on having many—Characters of the Grocer Dawkins and his Friend; their different Kinds of Disappointment—Three Infants named—An Orphan Girl and Village Schoolmistress—Gardener's Child: Pedantry and Conceit of the Father: his botanical Discourse: Method of fixing the Embryo-fruit of Cucumbers—Absurd Effects of Rustic Vanity: observed in the names of their Children—Relation of the Vestry Debate on a Foundling: Sir Richard Monday—Children of various Inhabitants—The poor Farmer—Children of a Profligate: his Character and Fate—Conclusion.

THE year revolves, and I again explore
The simple Annals of my Parish poor;
What Infant-members in my flock appear,
What Pairs I bless'd in the departed year;
And who, of Old or Young, or Nymphs or Swains,
Are lost to Life, its pleasures and its pains.
No Muse I ask, before my view to bring
The humble actions of the swains I sing.—
How pass'd the youthful, how the old their days;
Who sank in sloth, and who aspired to praise;
Their tempers, manners, morals, customs, arts,
What parts they had, and how they 'mploy'd their parts;
By what elated, soothed, seduced, depress'd,
Full well I know—these Records give the rest.
Is there a place, save one the poet sees,
A land of love, of liberty and ease;
Where labour wearies not, nor cares suppress
Th' eternal flow of rustic happiness;
Where no proud mansion frowns in awful state,
Or keeps the sunshine from the cottage-gate;
Where young and old, intent on pleasure, throng,
And half man's life is holiday and song?
Vain search for scenes like these! no view appears,
By sighs unruffled or unstain'd by tears;
Since vice the world subdued and waters drown'd,
Auburn[4] and Eden can no more be found.
Hence good and evil mixed, but man has skill
And power to part them, when he feels the will!
Toil, care, and patience bless th' abstemious few,
Fear, shame, and want the thoughtless herd pursue.[5]
Behold the Cot! where thrives th' industrious swain,
Source of his pride, his pleasure, and his gain;
Screen'd from the winter's wind, the sun's last ray
Smiles on the window and prolongs the day;
Projecting thatch the woodbine's branches stop,
And turn their blossoms to the casement's top:

[1] ["The Parish Register" was first published in the collection of 1807; the preface to which (see *antè*, pp. 98, 99) gives some particulars respecting the revision of this poem, in MS., by Mr. Turner and by Mr. Fox. A period of twenty-two years had elapsed between the appearance of "The Newspaper" and that of "The Parish Register:"—as to this long silence of the poet, see his Life, *antè*, pp. 47, 61; and the Quarterly Review, No. C. p. 488.]

[2] ["This poem, like 'The Village,' is dedicated to the delineation of rural life and characters, and, upon a very simple but singular plan, is divided into three parts. After an introductory and general view of village manners, the reverend author proceeds to present his readers with an account of all the remarkable baptisms, marriages, and funerals that appear on his register for the preceding year, with a sketch of the character and behaviour of the respective parties, and such reflections and exhortations as are suggested by the subject. The poem consists, therefore, of a series of Portraits, taken from the middling and lower ranks of rustic life, and delineated on occasions at once more common and more interesting than any other that could well be imagined. They are selected with great judgment, and drawn with inimitable accuracy and strength of colouring. They are finished with much more minuteness and detail than the more general pictures in 'The Village.'"—JEFFREY.]

[3] ["A man, when first he leaves his prim'tive night,
Breaks from his mother's womb to view the light;
Like a poor carcass tumbled by the flood,
He falls weak, naked, destitute of food;
With tender cries the pitying air he fills,—
A fit presage for all his coming ills."—CREECH.]

[4] ["Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain!" &c. GOLDSMITH.]

[5] ["How evil came into the world—for what reason it is

All need requires is in that cot contain'd,
And much that taste untaught and unrestrain'd
Surveys delighted; there she loves to trace,
In one gay picture, all the royal race;
Around the walls are heroes, lovers, kings;
The print that shows them and the verse that sings.
Here the last Lewis on his throne is seen,
And there he stands imprison'd, and his Queen;[6]
To these the mother takes her child, and shows
What grateful duty to his God he owes;
Who gives to him a happy home, where he
Lives and enjoys his freedom with the free;
When kings and queens, dethroned, insulted, tried,
Are all these blessings of the poor denied.
There is King Charles, and all his Golden Rules,[7]
Who proved Misfortune's was the best of schools:
And there his Son, who, tried by years of pain,
Proved that misfortunes may be sent in vain.
The Magic-mill that grinds the gran'nams young,
Close at the side of kind Godiva[8] hung;
She, of her favourite place the pride and joy,
Of charms at once most lavish and most coy,
By wanton act the purest fame could raise,
And give the boldest deed the chastest praise.
There stands the stoutest Ox in England fed;[9]
There fights the boldest Jew, Whitechapel bred;[10]
And here Saint Monday's worthy votaries live,
In all the joys that ale and skittles give.[11]
Now lo! on Egypt's coast that hostile fleet,
By nations dreaded and by NELSON beat;[12]
And here shall soon another triumph come,
A deed of glory in a day of gloom;
Distressing glory! grievous boon of fate!
The proudest conquest, at the dearest rate.[13]
On shelf of deal beside the cuckoo-clock,
Of cottage-reading rests the chosen stock;
Learning we lack, not books, but have a kind
For all our wants, a meat for every mind.
The tale for wonder and the joke for whim,
The half-sung sermon and the half-groan'd hymn.
No need of classing; each within its place,
The feeling finger in the dark can trace;
"First from the corner, farthest from the wall,"
Such all the rules, and they suffice for all.
There pious works for Sunday's use are found;
Companions for that Bible newly bound;
That Bible, bought by sixpence weekly saved,
Has choicest prints by famous hands engraved;
Has choicest notes by many a famous head,
Such as to doubt have rustic readers led;
Have made them stop to reason *why*? and *how*?
And, where they once agreed, to cavil now.
Oh! rather give me commentators plain,
Who with no deep researches vex the brain;
Who from the dark and doubtful love to run,
And hold their glimmering tapers to the sun;
Who simple truth with nine-fold reasons back,
And guard the point no enemies attack.
Bunyan's famed Pilgrim rests that shelf upon,
A genius rare but rude was honest John;[14]
Not one who, early by the Muse beguiled,
Drank from her well the waters undefiled;
Not one who slowly gained the hill sublime,
Then often sipp'd and little at a time;
But one who dabbled in the sacred springs,
And drank them muddy, mix'd with baser things.
Here to interpret dreams we read the rules,
Science our own! and never taught in schools;
In moles and specks we Fortune's gifts discern,
And Fate's fix'd will from Nature's wanderings learn.
Of Hermit Quarll we read, in island rare,[15]
Far from mankind and seeming far from care;
Safe from all want, and sound in every limb;
Yes! there was he, and there was care with him.
Unbound and heap'd, these valued tomes beside,
Lay humbler works, the pedlar's pack supplied;

that life is overspread with such boundless varieties of misery,—why the only thinking being of this globe is doomed to think, merely to be wretched, and to pass his time from youth to age in fearing or in suffering calamities,—is a question which philosophers have long asked, and which philosophy could never answer. Religion informs us that misery and sin were produced together. The depravation of human will was followed by a disorder of the harmony of nature; and by that Providence which often places antidotes in the neighbourhood of poisons, vice was checked by misery, lest it should swell to universal and unlimited dominion. That misery does not make all virtuous, experience too clearly informs us: but it is no less certain that, of what virtue there is, misery produces far the greater part. Physical evil may be, therefore, endured with patience, since it is the cause of moral good; and patience itself is one virtue by which we are prepared for that state in which evil shall be no more."—JOHNSON.]

[6] [Lewis the Sixteenth, and Marie Antoinette.]

[7] ["1, Urge no healths; 2. Profane no divine ordinances; 3. Touch no state matters; 4. Reveal no secrets; 5. Pick no quarrels; 6. Make no comparisons; 7. Maintain no ill opinions; 8. Keep no bad company; 9. Encourage no vice; 10. Make no long meals; 11. Repeat no grievances; 12, Lay no wagers."]

[8] [Wife of the Earl of Mercia, who, in the eleventh century, is said to have ridden through Coventry naked, on condition that her husband would remit certain heavy taxes, with which he had loaded the citizens.]

[9] [The extraordinary Lancashire ox, sixteen hands in height, and weighing 1568 lbs.]

[10] [Daniel Mendoza, the pugilist, who, in 1788, fought the celebrated bruising-match with Humphreys.]

[11] [*Saint* Monday—a cant name, indicating the idleness which too often characterises the *Monday* of artisans who have been paid their week's *wages on the* Saturday night.]

[12] [The battle of the Nile, in 1798.]

[13] [The battle of Trafalgar, in 1805, in which Nelson was killed.]

[14] ["Ingenious Dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;
Witty, and well-employ'd, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables his slighted word;
I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame:
Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
Revere the man, whose PILGRIM marks the road,
And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God."
COWPER.

"If ever," says Mr. Southey, "there was a work which carried with it the stamp of originality in all its parts, it is that of John Bunyan."]

[15] ["The Hermit; or, unparalleled Sufferings and surprising Adventures of Philip Quarll."]

Yet these, long since, have all acquired a name;
The Wandering Jew has found his way to fame;[16]
And fame, denied to many a labour'd song,
Crowns Thumb the Great,[17] and Hickathrift the strong.[18]
There too is he, by wizard-power upheld,
Jack,[19] by whose arm the giant-brood were quell'd:
His shoes of swiftness on his feet he placed;
His coat of darkness on his loins he braced;
His sword of sharpness in his hand he took,
And off the heads of doughty giants stroke:
Their glaring eyes beheld no mortal near;
No sound of feet alarm'd the drowsy ear;
No English blood their Pagan sense could smell,
But heads drop headlong, wondering why they fell.
These are the Peasant's joy, when, placed at ease,
Half his delighted offspring mount his knees.
To every cot the lord's indulgent mind
Has a small space for garden-ground assign'd;
Here—till return of morn dismiss'd the farm—
The careful peasant plies the sinewy arm,
Warm'd as he works, and casts his look around
On every foot of that improving ground:
It is his own he sees; his master's eye
Peers not about, some secret fault to spy;
Nor voice severe is there, nor censure known;—
Hope, profit, pleasure,—they are all his own.
Here grow the humble cives, and, hard by them,
The leek with crown globose and reedy stem;
High climb his pulse in many an even row,
Deep strike the ponderous roots in soil below;
And herbs of potent smell and pungent taste,
Give a warm relish to the night's repast.
Apples and cherries grafted by his hand,
And cluster'd nuts for neighbouring market stand.
Nor thus concludes his labour; near the cot,
The reed-fence rises round some fav'rite spot;
Where rich carnations, pinks with purple eyes,
Proud hyacinths, the least some florist's prize,
Tulips tall-stemm'd and pounced auriculas rise.
Here on a Sunday-eve, when service ends,
Meet and rejoice a family of friends;
All speak aloud, are happy and are free,
And glad they seem, and gaily they agree.
What, though fastidious ears may shun the speech,
Where all are talkers, and where none can teach;
Where still the welcome and the words are old,
And the same stories are for ever told;
Yet theirs is joy that, bursting from the heart,
Prompts the glad tongue these nothings to impart;
That forms these tones of gladness we despise,
That lifts their steps, that sparkles in their eyes;
That talks or laughs or runs or shouts or plays,
And speaks in all their looks and all their ways.
Fair scenes of peace! ye might detain us long,
But vice and misery now demand the song;

And turn our view from dwellings simply neat,
To this infected Row, we term our Street.
Here, in cabal, a disputatious crew
Each evening meet; the sot, the cheat, the shrew;
Riots are nightly heard:—the curse, the cries
Of beaten wife, perverse in her replies;
While shrieking children hold each threat'ning hand,
And sometimes life, and sometimes food demand:
Boys, in their first-stol'n rags, to swear begin,
And girls, who heed not dress, are skill'd in gin:
Snarers and smugglers here their gains divide;
Ensnaring females here their victims hide;
And here is one, the Sibyl of the Row,
Who knows all secrets, or affects to know.
Seeking their fate, to her the simple run,
To her the guilty, theirs awhile to shun;
Mistress of worthless arts, depraved in will,
Her care unblest and unrepaid her skill,
Slave to the tribe, to whose command she stoops,
And poorer than the poorest maid she dupes.
Between the road-way and the walls, offence
Invades all eyes and strikes on every sense:
There lie, obscene, at every open door,
Heaps from the hearth and sweepings from the floor,
And day by day the mingled masses grow,
As sinks are disembogued and kennels flow.
There hungry dogs from hungry children steal;
There pigs and chickens quarrel for a meal;
Their dropsied infants wail without redress,
And all is want and woe and wretchedness;
Yet should these boys, with bodies bronzed and bare,
High-swoln and hard, outlive that lack of care—
Forced on some farm, the unexerted strength,
Though loth to action, is compell'd at length,
When warm'd by health, as serpents in the spring,
Aside their slough of indolence they fling.
Yet, ere they go, a greater evil comes—
See! crowded beds in those contiguous rooms;
Beds but ill parted, by a paltry screen
Of paper'd lath, or curtain dropt between;
Daughters and sons to yon compartments creep,
And parents here beside their children sleep:
Ye who have power, these thoughtless people part,
Nor let the ear be first to taint the heart.
Come! search within, nor sight nor smell regard;
The true physician walks the foulest ward.
See! on the floor, what frousy patches rest!
What nauseous fragments on yon fractured chest!
What downy dust beneath yon window-seat!
And round these posts that serve this bed for feet;
This bed where all those tatter'd garments lie,
Worn by each sex, and now perforce thrown by!
See! as we gaze, an infant lifts its head,
Left by neglect and burrow'd in that bed;
The Mother-gossip has the love suppress'd
An infant's cry once waken'd in her breast;
And daily prattles, as her round she takes,
(With strong resentment) of the want she makes.

[16] [The legend of the *Wandering Jew*—*i. e.* of an individual who, insulting our Saviour when on his way to Golgotha, was, in punishment, doomed to survive on earth until the second coming of Jesus Christ—was a favourite theme of the monastic literature in the middle ages, and has been recently taken up by writers of great talent in several countries—for example, by Lewis, in "The Monk"—by Godwin, in "St. Leon"—in a poem styled "The Wandering Jew," by P. B. Shelley—and lastly, by the Rev. Dr. Croly, in the romance of "Salathiel." The ballads and chap-books on this subject are innumerable.]

[17] ["Life of the renowned Thomas Thumb the Great."]

[18] ["History of Mr. Thomas Hickathrift, afterwards Sir Thomas Hickathrift, Knight."]

[19] ["History of Jack the Giant Killer."]

Whence all these woes?—From want of virtuous will,
Of honest shame, of time-improving skill;
From want of care t' employ the vacant hour,
And want of every kind but want of power.
Here are no wheels for either wool or flax,
But packs of cards—made up of sundry packs.
Here is no clock, nor will they turn the glass,
And see how swift th' important moments pass;
Here are no books, but ballads on the wall,
Are some abusive, and indecent all;
Pistols are here, unpair'd; with nets and hooks,
Of every kind, for rivers, ponds, and brooks;
An ample flask, that nightly rovers fill
With recent poison from the Dutchman's still;
A box of tools, with wires of various size,
Frocks, wigs, and hats, for night or day disguise,
And bludgeons stout to gain or guard a prize.
To every house belongs a space of ground,
Of equal size, once fenced with paling round;
That paling now by slothful waste destroy'd,
Dead gorse and stumps of elder fill the void;
Save in the centre-spot, whose walls of clay
Hide sots and striplings at their drink or play:
Within, a board, beneath a tiled retreat,
Allures the bubble and maintains the cheat;
Where heavy ale in spots like varnish shows,
Where chalky tallies yet remain in rows;
Black pipes and broken jugs the seats defile,
The walls and windows, rhymes and reck'nings vile;
Prints of the meanest kind disgrace the door,
And cards, in curses torn, lie fragments on the floor.
Here his poor bird th' inhuman Cocker brings,
Arms his hard heel and clips his golden wings;
With spicy food th' impatient spirit feeds,
And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds.[20]
Struck through the brain, deprived of both his eyes,
The vanquish'd bird must combat till he dies;
Must faintly peck at his victorious foe,
And reel and stagger at each feeble blow:
When fallen, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes,
His blood-stain'd arms, for other deaths assumes;
And damns the craven-fowl, that lost his stake,
And only bled and perish'd for his sake.[21]

Such are our Peasants, those to whom we yield
Praise with relief, the fathers of the field;
And these who take from our reluctant hands
What Burn advises[22] or the Bench commands.
Our Farmers round, well pleased with constant gain,
Like other farmers, flourish and complain.—
These are our groups; our Portraits next appear,
And close our Exhibition for the year.[23]

With evil omen we that year begin:
A Child of Shame,—stern Justice adds, of Sin,
Is first recorded;—I would hide the deed,
But vain the wish; I sigh and I proceed:
And could I well th' instructive truth convey,
'T would warn the giddy and awake the gay.
Of all the nymphs who gave our village grace,
The Miller's daughter had the fairest face:
Proud was the Miller; money was his pride;
He rode to market, as our farmers ride,
And 't was his boast, inspired by spirits, there,
His favourite Lucy should be rich as fair;
But she must meek and still obedient prove,
And not presume, without his leave, to love.
A youthful Sailor heard him;—"Ha!" quoth he,
"This Miller's maiden is a prize for me;
"Her charms I love, his riches I desire,
"And all his threats but fan the kindling fire;
"My ebbing purse no more the foe shall fill,
"But Love's kind act and Lucy at the mill."
Thus thought the youth, and soon the chace began,
Stretch'd all his sail, nor thought of pause or plan:
His trusty staff in his bold hand he took,
Like him and like his frigate, heart of oak;
Fresh were his features, his attire was new;
Clean was his linen, and his jacket blue:
Of finest jean, his trowsers, tight and trim,
Brush'd the large buckle at the silver rim.
He soon arrived, he traced the village-green,
There saw the maid, and was with pleasure seen;
Then talk'd of love, till Lucy's yielding heart
Confess'd 't was painful, though 't was right to part.

[20] ["We should find it hard to vindicate the destroying of any thing that has life, merely out of wantonness; yet on this principle our children are bred up, and one of the first pleasures we allow them is, the licence of inflicting pain upon poor animals; almost as soon as we are sensible what life is ourselves, we make it our sport to take it from other creatures."—POPE.]

[21] ["There is nothing comparable with the above description, but some of the prose sketches of Mandeville."—JEFFREY.]

[22] [*Burn's Justice of the Peace and Parish Officer.*]

[23] ["Crabbe is confessedly the most original and vivid painter of the vast varieties of common life, that England has ever produced; and while several living poets possess a more splendid and imposing representation, we are greatly mistaken if he has not taken a firmer hold than any other, on the melancholy convictions of men's hearts ruminating on the good and evil of this mysterious world. Of all men of this age, he is the best Portrait-painter: he is never contented with a single flowing sketch of a character—they must all be drawn full-length—to the very life—and with all their most minute and characteristic features, even of dress and manners. He seems to have known them all personally; and when he describes them, he does so as if he thought that he would be guilty of a kind of falsehood, in omitting the description of a single peculiarity. Accustomed to look on men as they exist and act, he not only does not fear, but he absolutely loves to view their vices and their miseries; and hence has his poetry been accused of giving too dark a picture of life. But, at the same time, we must remember what those haunts of life are into which his spirit has wandered. The power is almost miraculous with which he has stirred up human nature from its very dregs, and shown working in them the common spirit of humanity. He lays before us scenes and characters from which, in real life, we should turn our eyes with intolerant disgust; and yet he forces us to own, that on such scenes, and by such characters, much the same kind of part is played that ourselves play on another stage. He leaves it to other poets to carry us into the company of shepherds and dalesmen, in the heart of pastoral peace; and sets us down in crowds of fierce and sullen men, contending against each other, in lawful or in lawless life, with all the energies of exasperated passion. To us it appears, that until Crabbe wrote, we knew not what direful tragedies are for ever steeping in tears or in blood the footsteps of the humblest of our race; and that he has opened, as it were, a theatre, on which the homely actors that pass before us assume no disguise—on which every catastrophe borrows its terror from truth and every scene seems shifted by the very hands of nature."—WILSON.]

"For ah! my father has a haughty soul;
"Whom best he loves, he loves but to control;
"Me to some churl in bargain he 'll consign,
"And make some tyrant of the parish mine:
"Cold is his heart, and he with looks severe
"Has often forced but never shed the tear;
"Save, when my mother died, some drops express'd
"A kind of sorrow for a wife at rest:—
"To me a master's stern regard is shown,
"I'm like his steed, prized highly as his own;
"Stroked but corrected, threatened when supplied,
"His slave and boast, his victim and his pride."
"Cheer up, my lass! I 'll to thy father go,
"The Miller cannot be the Sailor's foe;
"Both live by Heaven's free gale, that plays aloud
"In the stretch'd canvass and the piping shroud;
"The rush of winds, the flapping sails above,
"And rattling planks within, are sounds *we* love;
"Calms are our dread; when tempests plough the deep,
"We take a reef, and to the rocking sleep."
"Ha!" quoth the Miller, moved at speech so rash,
"Art thou like me? then where thy notes and cash?
"Away to Wapping, and a wife command,
"With all thy wealth, a guinea in thine hand;
"There with thy messmates quaff the muddy cheer,
"And leave my Lucy for thy betters here."
"Revenge! revenge!" the angry lover cried,
Then sought the nymph, and "Be thou now my bride."
Bride had she been, but they no priest could move
To bind in law, the couple bound by love.
What sought these lovers then by day by night?
But stolen moments of disturb'd delight;
Soft trembling tumults, terrors dearly prized,
Transports that pain'd, and joys that agonised;
Till the fond damsel, pleased with lad so trim,
Awed by her parent, and enticed by him,
Her lovely form from savage power to save,
Gave—not her hand—but ALL she could she gave.
Then came the day of shame, the grievous night,
The varying look, the wandering appetite;
The joy assumed, while sorrow dimm'd the eyes,
The forced sad smiles that follow'd sudden sighs;
And every art, long used, but used in vain,
To hide thy progress, Nature, and thy pain.
Too eager caution shows some danger 's near,
The bully's bluster proves the coward's fear;
His sober step the drunkard vainly tries,
And nymphs expose the failings they disguise.
First, whispering gossips were in parties seen,
Then louder Scandal walk'd the village-green;
Next babbling Folly told the growing ill,
And busy Malice dropp'd it at the mill.
"Go! to thy curse and mine," the Father said,
"Strife and confusion stalk around thy bed;
"Want and a wailing brat thy portion be,
"Plague to thy fondness, as thy fault to me;—
"Where skulks the villain?"—
"On the ocean wide
"My William seeks a portion for his bride."—
"Vain be his search! but, till the traitor come,
"The higgler's cottage be thy future home;
"There with his ancient shrew and care abide,
"And hide thy head,—thy shame thou canst not hide."

Day after day was pass'd in pains and grief;
Week follow'd week,—and still was no relief:
Her boy was born—no lads nor lasses came
To grace the rite or give the child a name;
Nor grave conceited nurse, of office proud,
Bore the young Christian roaring through the crowd:
In a small chamber was my office done,
Where blinks through paper'd panes the setting sun;
Where noisy sparrows, perch'd on penthouse near,
Chirp tuneless joy, and mock the frequent tear;
Bats on their webby wings in darkness move,
And feebly shriek their melancholy love.
No Sailor came; the months in terror fled!
Then news arrived—He fought, and he was DEAD!
At the lone cottage Lucy lives, and still
Walks for her weekly pittance to the mill;
A mean seraglio there her father keeps,
Whose mirth insults her, as she stands and weeps;
And sees the plenty, while compell'd to stay,
Her father's pride, become his harlot's prey.
Throughout the lanes she glides, at evening's close,
And softly lulls her infant to repose;
Then sits and gazes, but with viewless look,
As gilds the moon the rippling of the brook;
And sings her vespers, but in voice so low,
She hears their murmurs as the waters flow:
And she too murmurs, and begins to find
The solemn wanderings of a wounded mind.
Visions of terror, views of woe succeed,
The mind's impatience, to the body's need;
By turns to that, by turns to this a prey,
She knows what reason yields, and dreads what madness may.

Next, with their boy, a decent couple came,
And call'd him Robert, 't was his father's name;
Three girls preceded, all by time endear'd,
And future births were neither hoped nor fear'd:
Blest in each other, but to no excess,
Health, quiet, comfort, form'd their happiness;
Love all made up of torture and delight,
Was but mere madness in this couple's sight:
Susan could think, though not without a sigh,
If she were gone, who should her place supply;
And Robert, half in earnest, half in jest,
Talk of her spouse when he should be at rest:
Yet strange would either think it to be told,
Their love was cooling or their hearts were cold.
Few were their acres,—but, with these content,
They were, each pay-day, ready with their rent:
And few their wishes—what their farm denied,
The neighbouring town, at trifling cost, supplied.
If at the draper's window Susan cast
A longing look, as with her goods she pass'd,
And, with the produce of the wheel and churn,
Bought her a Sunday-robe on her return;
True to her maxim, she would take no rest,
Till care repaid that portion to the chest:
Or if, when loitering at the Whitsun-fair,
Her Robert spent some idle shillings there:
Up at the barn, before the break of day,
He made his labour for th' indulgence pay:
Thus both—that waste itself might work in vain—
Wrought double tides, and all was well again.

Yet, though so prudent, there were times of joy,
(The day they wed, the christening of the boy,)
When to the wealthier farmers there was shown
Welcome unfeign'd, and plenty like their own;
For Susan served the great, and had some pride
Among our topmost people to preside:
Yet in that plenty, in that welcome free,
There was the guiding nice frugality,
That, in the festal as the frugal day,
Has, in a different mode, a sovereign sway;
As tides the same attractive influence know,
In the least ebb and in their proudest flow;
The wise frugality, that does not give
A life to saving, but that saves to live;
Sparing, not pinching, mindful though not mean,
O'er all presiding, yet in nothing seen.

Recorded next a babe of love I trace!
Of many loves, the mother's fresh disgrace.—
" Again, thou harlot! could not all thy pain,
" All my reproof, thy wanton thoughts restrain?"
" Alas! your reverence, wanton thoughts, I grant,
" Were once my motive, now the thoughts of want;
" Women, like me, as ducks in a decoy,
" Swim down a stream, and seem to swim in joy.
" Your sex pursue us, and our own disdain;
" Return is dreadful, and escape is vain.
" Would men forsake us, and would women strive
" To help the fall'n, their virtue might revive." [24]
For rite of churching soon she made her way,
In dread of scandal, should she miss the day:—
Two matrons came! with them she humbly knelt,
Their action copied and their comforts felt,
From that great pain and peril to be free,
Though still in peril of that pain to be;
Alas! what numbers, like this amorous dame,
Are quick to censure, but are dead to shame!

Twin-infants then appear; a girl, a boy,
Th' o'erflowing cup of Gerard Ablett's joy:
One had I named in every year that passed
Since Gerard wed! and twins behold at last!
Well pleased, the bridegroom smiled to hear—" A vine
" Fruitful and spreading round the walls be thine,[25]
" And branch-like be thine offspring!"—Gerard then
Look'd joyful love, and softly said " Amen."
Now of that vine he 'd have no more increase,
Those playful branches now disturb his peace:
Them he beholds around his tables spread,
But finds, the more the branch, the less the bread;
And while they run his humble walls about,
They keep the sunshine of good humour out.
Cease, man, to grieve! thy master's lot survey,
Whom wife and children, thou and thine obey;
A farmer proud, beyond a farmer's pride,
Of all around the envy or the guide;
Who trots to market on a steed so fine,
That when I meet him, I 'm ashamed of mine;
Whose board is high up-heaved with generous fare,
Which five stout sons and three tall daughters share.
Cease, man, to grieve, and listen to his care.
A few years fled, and all thy boys shall be
Lords of a cot, and labourers like thee:
Thy girls unportion'd neighb'ring youths shall lead
Brides from my church, and thenceforth thou art freed:
But then thy master shall of cares complain,
Care after care, a long connected train;
His sons for farms shall ask a large supply,
For farmers' sons each gentle miss shall sigh;
Thy mistress, reasoning well of life's decay,
Shall ask a chaise, and hardly brook delay;
The smart young cornet, who with so much grace
Rode in the ranks and betted at the race,
While the vex'd parent rails at deed so rash,
Shall d—n his luck, and stretch his hand for cash.
Sad troubles, Gerard! now pertain to thee,
When thy rich master seems from trouble free;
But 't is one fate at different times assign'd,
And thou shalt lose the cares that he must find.

" Ah!" quoth our village Grocer, rich and old,
" Would I might one such cause for care behold!"
To whom his Friend, " Mine greater bliss would be,
" Would Heav'n take those my spouse assigns to me."

Aged were both, that Dawkins, Ditchem this,
Who much of marriage thought, and much amiss;
Both would delay, the one, till—riches gain'd,
The son he wish'd might be to honour train'd;
His Friend—lest fierce intruding heirs should come,
To waste his hoard and vex his quiet home.
Dawkins, a dealer once, on burthen'd back
Bore his whole substance in a pedlar's pack;
To dames discreet, the duties yet unpaid,
His stores of lace and hyson he convey'd:
When thus enrich'd, he chose at home to stop,
And fleece his neighbours in a new-built shop;
Then woo'd a spinster blithe, and hoped, when wed,
For love's fair favours and a fruitful bed.
Not so his Friend;—on widow fair and staid
He fix'd his eye, but he was much afraid;
Yet woo'd; while she his hair of silver hue
Demurely noticed, and her eye withdrew:
Doubtful he paused—" Ah! were I sure," he cried,
" No craving children would my gains divide;
" Fair as she is, I would my widow take,
" And live more largely for my partner's sake."
With such their views some thoughtful years they pass'd,
And hoping, dreading, they were bound at last.
And what their fate? Observe them as they go,
Comparing fear with fear and woe with woe.
" Humphrey!" said Dawkins, " envy in my breast
" Sickens to see thee in thy children blest;

[24] [" Let the libertine reflect a moment on the situation of that woman, who, being forsaken by her betrayer, is reduced to the necessity of turning prostitute for bread, and judge of the enormity of his guilt by the evils which it produces. Where can she hope for refuge? '*The world is not her friend, nor the world's law.*' Surely those whom passion or interest have already depraved, have some claim to compassion, from beings equally frail and fallible with themselves!"—JOHNSON.]

[25] [" Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house; thy children like olive plants about thy table."—*Psalm* cxxviii. 3.]

"They are thy joys, while I go grieving home
"To a sad spouse, and our eternal gloom:
"We look despondency; no infant near,
"To bless the eye or win the parent's ear;
"Our sudden heats and quarrels to allay,
"And soothe the petty sufferings of the day:
"Alike our want, yet both the want reprove;
"Where are, I cry, these pledges of our love?
"When she, like Jacob's wife, makes fierce reply,
"Yet fond—Oh! give me children, or I die:[26]
"And I return—still childless doom'd to live,
"Like the vex'd patriarch—Are they mine to give?
"Ah! much I envy thee thy boys, who ride
"On poplar branch, and canter at thy side;
"And girls, whose cheeks thy chin's fierce fondness know,
"And with fresh beauty at the contact glow."
"Oh! simple friend," said Ditchem, "wouldst thou gain
"A father's pleasure by a husband's pain?
"Alas! what pleasure—when some vig'rous boy
"Should swell thy pride, some rosy girl thy joy;
"Is it to doubt who grafted this sweet flower,
"Or whence arose that spirit and that power?
"Four years I've wed; not one has passed in vain;
"Behold the fifth! behold a babe again!
"My wife's gay friends th' unwelcome imp admire,
"And fill the room with gratulation dire:
"While I in silence sate, revolving all
"That influence ancient men, or that befall;
"A gay pert guest—Heav'n knows his business—came;
"A glorious boy! he cried, and what the name?
"Angry I growl'd,—My spirit cease to tease,
"Name it yourselves,—Cain, Judas, if you please;
"His father's give him,—should you that explore,
"The devil's or yours:—I said, and sought the door.
"My tender partner not a word or sigh
"Gives to my wrath, nor to my speech reply;
"But takes her comforts, triumphs in my pain,
"And looks undaunted for a birth again."
Heirs thus denied afflict the pining heart,
And thus afforded, jealous pangs impart;
Let, therefore, none avoid, and none demand
These arrows number'd for the giant's hand.

Then with their infants three, the parents came,
And each assign'd—'twas all they had—a name;
Names of no mark or price; of them not one
Shall court our view on the sepulchral stone,
Or stop the clerk, th' engraven scrolls to spell,
Or keep the sexton from the sermon bell.

An orphan-girl succeeds: ere she was born
Her father died, her mother on that morn:
The pious mistress of the school sustains
Her parents' part, nor their affection feigns,
But pitying feels: with due respect and joy,
I trace the matron at her loved employ;
What time the striplings, wearied e'en with play,
Part at the closing of the summer's day,
And each by different path returns the well-known way—
Then I behold her at her cottage-door,
Frugal of light;—her Bible laid before;
When on her double duty she proceeds,
Of time as frugal—knitting as she reads:
Her idle neighbours, who approach to tell
Some trifling tale, her serious looks compel
To hear reluctant,—while the lads who pass,
In pure respect, walk silent on the grass:
Then sinks the day, but not to rest she goes,
Till solemn prayers the daily duties close.

But I digress, and lo! an infant train
Appear, and call me to my task again.
"Why Lonicera wilt thou name thy child?"
I asked the Gardener's wife, in accents mild:
"We have a right," replied the sturdy dame;—
And Lonicera[27] was the infant's name.
If next a son shall yield our Gardener joy,
Then Hyacinthus[28] shall be that fair boy;
And if a girl, they will at length agree
That Belladonna[29] that fair maid shall be.
High-sounding words our worthy Gardener gets,
And at his club to wondering swains repeats;
He then of Rhus[30] and Rhododendron[31] speaks,
And Allium calls his onions and his leeks;
Nor weeds are now, for whence arose the weed,
Scarce plants, fair herbs, and curious flowers proceed;
Where Cuckoo-pints and Dandelions sprung,
(Gross names had they our plainer sires among,)
There Arums, there Leontodons we view,
And Artemisia grows where wormwood grew.
But though no weed exists his garden round,
From Rumex[32] strong our Gardener frees his ground,
Takes soft Senecio[33] from the yielding land,
And grasps the arm'd Urtica[34] in his hand.
Not Darwin's self had more delight to sing
Of floral courtship, in th' awaken'd Spring,
Than Peter Pratt, who simpering loves to tell
How rise the Stamens, as the Pistils swell;
How bend and curl the moist-top to the spouse,
And give and take the vegetable vows;[35]

[26] ["Rachael said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die."—*Gen.* xxx. 1.]

[27] [A genus of plants, class 5, Pentandria.]

[28] [A plant so called, as the poets feign, from Hyacynthus, a beautiful youth, who, being accidentally killed by Apollo, was changed into a flower.]

[29] [The deadly nightshade, the Atropa belladonna of Linnæus.]

[30] [In the Linnean system, a genus of plants, class 5.]

[31] [Otherwise called laurel-bay.]

[32] [The Lapathum sylvestre of Pliny, when it grew wild.]

[33] [So called, because it grows hoary, like the hare, in the spring.]

[34] [The nettle:—
"Wide o'er the madd'ning throng Urtica flings
Her barbed shafts, and darts her poison'd slings."
DARWIN.]

[35] ["First the tall Canna lifts his curled brow
Erect to Heaven, and plights his nuptial vow:
Round the chill fair he folds his crimson vest,
And clasps the timorous beauty to his breast."
DARWIN.]

How those esteem'd of old but tips and chives,
Are tender husbands and obedient wives;
Who live and love within the sacred bower,—
That bridal bed, the vulgar term a flower.
Hear Peter proudly, to some humble friend,
A wondrous secret, in his science, lend:—
"Would you advance the nuptial hour and bring
"The fruit of Autumn with the flowers of Spring;
"View that light frame where Cucumis [36] lies spread,
"And trace the husbands in their golden bed,
"Three powder'd Anthers; [37]—then no more delay,
"But to the Stigma's tip their dust convey;
"Then by thyself, from prying glance secure,
"Twirl the full tip and make your purpose sure;
"A long-abiding race the deed shall pay,
"Nor one unblest abortion pine away."
T' admire their friend's discourse our swains agree,
And call it science and philosophy.
'Tis good, 'tis pleasant, through th' advancing year,
To see unnumber'd growing forms appear;
What leafy-life from Earth's broad bosom rise!
What insect-myriads seek the summer skies!
What scaly tribes in every streamlet move;
What plumy people sing in every grove!
All with the year awaked to life, delight, and love.
Then names are good; for how, without their aid,
Is knowledge, gain'd by man, to man convey'd?
But from that source shall all our pleasures flow?
Shall all our knowledge be those names to know?
Then he, with memory blest, shall bear away
The palm from Grew,[38] and Middleton,[39] and Ray:[40]
No! let us rather seek, in grove and field,
What food for wonder, what for use they yield;
Some just remark from Nature's people bring,
And some new source of homage for her King.

Pride lives with all; strange names our rustics give
To helpless infants, that their own may live;
Pleased to be known, they 'll some attention claim,
And find some by-way to the house of fame.
The straightest furrow lifts the ploughman's art,
The hat he gain'd has warmth for head and heart;
The bowl that beats the greater number down
Of tottering nine-pins, gives to fame the clown;
Or, foil'd in these, he opes his ample jaws,
And lets a frog leap down, to gain applause;
Or grins for hours, or tipples for a week,
Or challenges a well-pinch'd pig to squeak:
Some idle deed, some child's preposterous name,
Shall make him known, and give his folly fame.

To name an infant meet our village sires,
Assembled all as such event requires;
Frequent and full, the rural sages sate,
And speakers many urged the long debate,—
Some harden'd knaves, who roved the country round,
Had left a babe within the parish-bound.—
First, of the fact they question'd—"Was it true?"
The child was brought—"What then remained to do?"
"Was't dead or living?" This was fairly proved,—
'T was pinch'd, it roar'd, and every doubt removed.
Then by what name th' unwelcome guest to call
Was long a question, and it posed them all;
For he who lent it to a babe unknown,
Censorious men might take it for his own:
They look'd about, they gravely spoke to all,
And not one *Richard* answer'd to the call.
Next they inquired the day, when, passing by,
Th' unlucky peasant heard the stranger's cry:
This known,—how food and raiment they might give,
Was next debated—for the rogue would live;
At last, with all their words and work content,
Back to their homes the prudent vestry went,
And *Richard Monday* [41] to the workhouse sent.
There was he pinch'd and pitied, thump'd and fed,
And duly took his beatings and his bread;
Patient in all control, in all abuse,
He found contempt and kicking have their use:
Sad, silent, supple; bending to the blow,
A slave of slaves, the lowest of the low;
His pliant soul gave way to all things base,
He knew no shame, he dreaded no disgrace.
It seem'd, so well his passions he suppress'd,
No feeling stirr'd his ever-torpid breast;
Him might the meanest pauper bruise and cheat,
He was a footstool for the beggar's feet;
His were the legs that ran at all commands;
They used on all occasions Richard's hands:
His very soul was not his own; he stole
As others order'd, and without a dole;
In all disputes, on either part he lied,
And freely pledged his oath on either side;
In all rebellions Richard join'd the rest,
In all detections Richard first confess'd:
Yet, though disgraced, he watch'd his time so well,
He rose in favour, when in fame he fell;
Base was his usage, vile his whole employ,
And all despised and fed the pliant boy.
At length, "'Tis time he should abroad be sent,"
Was whisper'd near him,—and abroad he went;
One morn they call'd him, Richard answer'd not;
They deem'd him hanging, and in time forgot,—
Yet miss'd him long, as each throughout the clan
Found he "had better spared a better man." [42]

[36] [The cucumber.]

[37] [Formerly called chives.]

[38] [A distinguished botanist, and author of the 'Anatomy of Plants.']

[39] [William Middleton, author of the 'Properties of Herbs,' &c. &c.]

[40] [The eminent author of the 'Historia Plantarum.' He died in 1705.]

[41] ["First I made him know his name should be *Friday*, which was the day I saved his life, and I called him so for the memory of the time."—*Robinson Crusoe.*]

[42] "Poor Jack! farewell;
I could have better spared a better man."
Henry V. of Falstaff. SHAKSPEARE.

Now Richard's talents for the world were fit,
He 'd no small cunning, and had some small wit;
Had that calm look which seem'd to all assent,
And that complacent speech which nothing meant:
He 'd but one care, and that he strove to hide—
How best for Richard Monday to provide.
Steel, through opposing plates, the magnet draws,
And steely atoms culls from dust and straws;
And thus our hero, to his interest true,
Gold through all bars and from each trifle drew;
But still more surely round the world to go,
This fortune's child had neither friend nor foe.
Long lost to us, at last our man we trace,—
"Sir Richard Monday died at Monday-place:"
His lady's worth, his daughter's, we peruse,
And find his grandsons all as rich as Jews:
He gave reforming charities a sum,
And bought the blessings of the blind and dumb;
Bequeathed to missions money from the stocks,
And Bibles issued from his private box;
But to his native place severely just,
He left a pittance bound in rigid trust;—
Two paltry pounds, on every quarter's-day,
(At church produced) for forty loaves should pay;
A stinted gift, that to the parish shows
He kept in mind their bounty and their blows!

To farmers three the year has given a son,
Finch on the Moor, and *French*, and *Middleton*.
Twice in this year a female *Giles* I see,
A *Spalding* once, and once a *Barnaby*:—
A humble man is *he*, and when they meet,
Our farmers find him on a distant seat;
There for their wit he serves a constant theme,—
"They praise his dairy, they extol his team,
"They ask the price of each unrivall'd steed,
"And whence his sheep, that admirable breed.
"His thriving arts they beg he would explain,
"And where he puts the money he must gain.
"They have their daughters, but they fear their friend
"Would think his sons too much would condescend;—
"They have their sons who would their fortunes try,
"But fear his daughters will their suit deny."
So runs the joke, while James, with sigh profound,
And face of care, looks moveless on the ground;
His cares, his sighs, provoke the insult more,
And point the jest—for Barnaby is poor.

Last in my list, five untaught lads appear;
Their father dead, compassion sent them here,—
For still that rustic infidel denied
To have their names with solemn rite applied:
His, a lone house, by Deadman's Dyke-way stood;
And his a nightly haunt, in Lonely-wood:
Each village inn has heard the ruffian boast,
That he believed "in neither God nor ghost;
"That when the sod upon the sinner press'd,
"He, like the saint, had everlasting rest;
"That never priest believed his doctrines true,
"But would, for profit, own himself a Jew,
"Or worship wood and stone, as honest heathen do;
"That fools alone on future worlds rely,
"And all who die for faith, deserve to die."
These maxims,—part th' Attorney's Clerk profess'd,
His own transcendent genius found the rest.
Our pious matrons heard, and, much amazed,
Gazed on the man, and trembled as they gazed;
And now his face explored, and now his feet,
Man's dreaded foe in this bad man to meet:
But him our drunkards as their champion raised,
Their *bishop* call'd, and as their hero praised;
Though most, when sober, and the rest, when sick,
Had little question whence his bishopric.
But he, triumphant spirit! all things dared;
He poach'd the wood, and on the warren snared;
'T was his, at cards, each novice to trepan,
And call the want of rogues "the rights of man;"
Wild as the winds he let his offspring rove,
And deem'd the marriage-bond the bane of love.
What age and sickness, for a man so bold,
Had done, we know not;—none beheld him old:
By night, as business urged, he sought the wood;—
The ditch was deep,—the rain had caused a flood,—
The foot-bridge fail'd,—he plunged beneath the deep,
And slept, if truth were his, th' eternal sleep.[43]

These have we named; on life's rough sea they sail,
With many a prosperous, many-an adverse gale!
Where passion soon, like powerful winds, will rage,
And prudence, wearied, with their strength engage:
Then each, in aid, shall some companion ask,
For help or comfort in the tedious task;
And what that help—what joys from union flow,
What good or ill, we next prepare to show;
And row, meantime, our weary bark ashore,
As Spenser his—but not with Spenser's oar.[44]

[43] [The infidel poacher was drawn from a blacksmith at Leiston, near Aldborough, whom the author visited in his capacity of surgeon, in 1779, and whose hardened character made a strong impression on his mind. Losing his hand by amputation, he exclaimed, with a sneer, "I suppose, Doctor Crabbe, I shall get it again at the resurrection!"]

[44] Allusions of this kind are to be found in the *Fairy Queen*. See the end of the First Book, and other places.

["Now strike your sailes, ye jolly mariners!
For wee be come into a quiet rode,
Where we must land some of our passengers,
And light this weary vessel of her lode," &c.]

PART II.

Nubere si quâ voles, quamvis properabitis ambo,
Differ; habent parvæ commoda magna moræ.
OVID. *Fast.* lib. iii.[1]

MARRIAGES.

Previous Consideration necessary: yet not too long Delay—Imprudent Marriage of old Kirk and his Servant—Comparison between an ancient and youthful Partner to a young Man—Prudence of Donald the Gardener—Parish Wedding: the compelled Bridegroom: Day of Marriage, how spent—Relation of the Accomplishments of Phœbe Dawson, a rustic Beauty: her Lover: his Courtship: their Marriage—Misery of Precipitation—The wealthy Couple: Reluctance in the Husband; why?—Unusually fair Signatures in the Register: the common Kind—Seduction of Lucy Collins by Footman Daniel: her rustic Lover: her Return to him—An ancient Couple: Comparisons on the Occasion—More pleasant View of Village Matrimony: Farmers celebrating the Day of Marriage: their Wives—Reuben and Rachael, a happy Pair: an example of prudent Delay—Reflections on their State who were not so prudent, and its Improvement towards the Termination of Life: an old Man so circumstanced—Attempt to seduce a Village Beauty: Persuasion and Reply: the Event.

DISPOSED to wed, e'en while you hasten, stay;
There's great advantage in a *small delay*:
Thus Ovid sang, and much the wise approve
This prudent maxim of the priest of Love;
If poor, delay for future want prepares,
And eases humble life of half its cares;
If rich, delay shall brace the thoughtful mind,
T' endure the ills that e'en the happiest find:
Delay shall knowledge yield on either part,
And show the value of the vanquish'd heart;
The humours, passions, merits, failings prove,
And gently raise the veil that 's worn by Love;
Love, that impatient guide!—too proud to think
Of vulgar wants, of clothing, meat and drink,
Urges our amorous swains their joys to seize,
And then, at rags and hunger frighten'd, flees:[2]—
Yet not too long in cold debate remain;
Till age refrain not—but if old, refrain.

By no such rule would Gaffer Kirk be tried;
First in the year he led a blooming bribe,
And stood a wither'd elder at her side.
Oh! Nathan! Nathan! at thy years trepann'd,
To take a wanton harlot by the hand!
Thou, who wert used so tartly to express
Thy sense of matrimonial happiness,
Till every youth, whose bans at church were read,
Strove not to meet, or meeting, hung his head;
And every lass forebore at thee to look,
A sly old fish, too cunning for the hook;
And now at sixty, that pert dame to see,
Of all thy savings mistress, and of thee;
Now will the lads, rememb'ring insults past,
Cry, "What, the wise one in the trap at last!"
Fie! Nathan! fie! to let an artful jade
The close recesses of thine heart invade;[3]
What grievous pangs! what suffering she 'll impart!
And fill with anguish that rebellious heart;
For thou wilt strive incessantly, in vain,
By threatening speech thy freedom to regain:
But she for conquest married, nor will prove
A dupe to thee, thine anger or thy love;
Clamorous her tongue will be:—of either sex,
She 'll gather friends around thee and perplex
Thy doubtful soul;—thy money she will waste
In the vain ramblings of a vulgar taste;
And will be happy to exert her power,
In every eye, in thine, at every hour.
Then wilt thou bluster—"No! I will not rest,
"And see consumed each shilling of my chest:"
Thou wilt be valiant—"When thy cousins call,
"I will abuse and shut my door on all:"
Thou wilt be cruel!—"What the law allows,
"That be thy portion, my ungrateful spouse!
"Nor other shillings shalt thou then receive;
"And when I die—What! may I this believe?
"Are these true tender tears? and does my Kitty grieve?
"Ah! crafty vixen, thine old man has fears;
"But weep no more! I 'm melted by thy tears;
"Spare but my money; thou shalt rule ME still,
"And see thy cousins:—there! I burn the will."
Thus, with example sad, our year began,
A wanton vixen and a weary man;
"But had this tale in other guise been told,"
Young let the lover be, the lady old,
And that disparity of years shall prove
No bane of peace, although some bar to love:
'T is not the worst, our nuptial ties among,
That joins the ancient bride and bridegroom young;—
Young wives, like changing winds, their power display
By shifting points and varying day by day;
Now zephyrs mild, now whirlwinds in their force,
They sometimes speed, but often thwart our course;
And much experienced should that pilot be,
Who sails with them on life's tempestuous sea.
But like a trade-wind is the ancient dame,
Mild to your wish and every day the same;
Steady as time, no sudden squalls you fear,
But set full sail and with assurance steer;
Till every danger in your way be past,
And then she gently, mildly breathes her last;
Rich you arrive, in port awhile remain,
And for a second venture sail again.

For this, blithe Donald southward made his way,
And left the lasses on the banks of Tay;

[1] ["Let lovers now, who burn with equal fires,
Put off awhile t' accomplish their desires:
A short delay will better omens give,
And you will more, and lasting joys receive."—MASSEY.]

[2] ["If thou have a fair wife, and a poor one; if thine own estate be not great, assure thyself that love abideth not with want; for she is the companion of plenty and honour."—Sir W. RALEIGH.]

[3] [Original edition:—

Fie, Nathan! fie! to let a sprightly jade
Leer on thy bed, then ask thee how 't was made,
And lingering walk around at head and feet,
To see thy nightly comforts all complete;
Then waiting seek—nor what she said she sought,
And bid a penny for her master's thought.]

Him to a neighbouring garden fortune sent,
Whom we beheld, aspiringly content:
Patient and mild he sought the dame to please,
Who ruled the kitchen and who bore the keys.
Fair Lucy first, the laundry's grace and pride,
With smiles and gracious looks, her fortune tried;
But all in vain she praised his "pawky eyne,"[4]
Where never fondness was for Lucy seen:
Him the mild Susan, boast of dairies, loved,
And found him civil, cautious and unmoved:
From many a fragrant simple, Catherine's skill
Drew oil and essence from the boiling still;
But not her warmth, nor all her winning ways,
From his cool phlegm could Donald's spirit raise:
Of beauty heedless, with the merry mute,
To *Mistress Dobson* he preferr'd his suit;
There proved his service, there address'd his vows,
And saw her mistress,—friend,—protectress,—spouse;
A butler now, he thanks his powerful bride,
And, like her keys, keeps constant at her side.

Next at our altar stood a luckless pair,
Brought by strong passions and a warrant there;
By long rent cloak, hung loosely, strove the bride,
From every eye, what all perceived, to hide.
While the boy-bridegroom, shuffling in his pace,
Now hid awhile and then exposed his face;
As shame alternately with anger strove,
The brain confused with muddy ale, to move
In haste and stammering he perform'd his part,
And look'd the rage that rankled in his heart;
(So will each lover inly curse his fate,
Too soon made happy and made wise too late:)
I saw his features take a savage gloom,
And deeply threaten for the days to come.
Low spake the lass, and lisp'd and minced the while,
Look'd on the lad, and faintly tried to smile;
With soften'd speech and humbled tone she strove
To stir the embers of departed love:
While he, a tyrant, frowning walk'd before,
Felt the poor purse, and sought the public door,
She sadly following, in submission went,
And saw the final shilling foully spent;
Then to her father's hut the pair withdrew,
And bade to love and comfort long adieu![5]
Ah! fly temptation, youth, refrain! refrain!
I preach for ever; but I preach in vain!

Two summers since, I saw at Lammas Fair
The sweetest flower that ever blossom'd there,
When *Phœbe Dawson* gaily cross'd the Green,
In haste to see and happy to be seen:
Her air, her manners, all who saw admired;
Courteous though coy, and gentle though retired;
The joy of youth and health her eyes display'd,
And ease of heart her every look convey'd;
A native skill her simple robes express'd,
As with untutor'd elegance she dress'd;
The lads around admired so fair a sight,
And Phœbe felt, and felt she gave, delight.

Admirers soon of every age she gain'd,
Her beauty won them and her worth retain'd;
Envy itself could no contempt display,
They wish'd her well, whom yet they wish'd away.
Correct in thought, she judged a servant's place
Preserved a rustic beauty from disgrace;
But yet on Sunday-eve, in freedom's hour,
With secret joy she felt that beauty's power,
When some proud bliss upon the heart would steal,
That, poor or rich, a beauty still must feel.
At length the youth ordain'd to move her breast,
Before the swains with bolder spirit press'd;
With looks less timid made his passion known,
And pleased by manners most unlike her own;
Loud though in love, and confident though young;
Fierce in his air, and voluble of tongue;
By trade a tailor, though, in scorn of trade,
He served the 'Squire, and brush'd the coat he made.
Yet now, would Phœbe her consent afford,
Her slave alone, again he 'd mount the board;
With her should years of growing love be spent,
And growing wealth;—she sigh'd and look'd consent.
Now, through the lane, up hill, and 'cross the green,
(Seen by but few, and blushing to be seen—
Dejected, thoughtful, anxious, and afraid,)
Led by the lover, walk'd the silent maid;
Slow through the meadows roved they, many a mile,
Toy'd by each bank, and trifled at each stile;
Where, as he painted every blissful view,
And highly colour'd what he strongly drew,
The pensive damsel, prone to tender fears,
Dimm'd the false prospect with prophetic tears.—
Thus pass'd th' allotted hours, till lingering late,
The lover loiter'd at the master's gate;
There he pronounced adieu! and yet would stay,
Till chidden—soothed—entreated—forced away;
He would of coldness, though indulged, complain,
And oft retire, and oft return again;
When, if his teasing vex'd her gentle mind,
The grief assumed, compell'd her to be kind!
For he would proof of plighted kindness crave,
That she resented first, and then forgave;
And to his grief and penance yielded more
Than his presumption had required before.[6]
Ah! fly temptation, youth; refrain! refrain!
Each yielding maid and each presuming swain!

Lo! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems in patience striving with her pains;
Pinch'd are her looks, as one who pines for bread,
Whose cares are growing and whose hopes are fled;
Pale her parch'd lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnoticed from their channels flow;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain
Frets the meek soul, and then she 's calm again;—
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes;

[4] ["Pawky, as applied to the eye, signifies wanton."—JAMIESON.]

[5] ["The above picture is, we think, perfect in this style of drawing."—JEFFREY.]

[6] ["This is the taking side of the picture: at the end of two years comes the reverse. Nothing can be more touching than the quiet suffering and solitary hysterics of this ill-fated young woman."—JEFFREY.]

For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause, her anxious soul alarms.
With water burthen'd, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious, in the clinging clay;
Till, in mid-green, she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in th' adhesive ground;
Thence, but with pain, her slender foot she takes,
While hope the mind as strength the frame forsakes:
For when so full the cup of sorrow grows,
Add but a drop, it instantly o'erflows.
And now her path, but not her peace, she gains,
Safe from her task, but shivering with her pains;
Her home she reaches, open leaves the door,
And placing first her infant on the floor,
She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits,
And sobbing struggles with the rising fits:
In vain they come, she feels the inflating grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief;
That speaks in feeble cries a soul distress'd,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be repress'd.
The neighbour-matron leaves her wheel and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies;
Unfee'd, the calls of Nature she obeys,
Not led by profit, not allur'd by praise;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort, and departs in peace.
Friend of distress! the mourner feels thy aid;
She cannot pay thee, but thou wilt be paid.

But who this child of weakness, want, and care?
'T is *Phœbe Dawson*, pride of Lammas Fair;
Who took her lover for his sparkling eyes,
Expressions warm, and love-inspiring lies:
Compassion first assail'd her gentle heart,
For all his suffering, all his bosom's smart:
"And then his prayers! they would a savage move,
"And win the coldest of the sex to love:"—
But ah! too soon his looks success declared,
Too late her loss the marriage-rite repair'd;
The faithless flatterer then his vows forgot,
A captious tyrant or a noisy sot:
If present, railing, till he saw her pain'd;
If absent, spending what their labours gain'd;
Till that fair form in want and sickness pined,
And hope and comfort fled that gentle mind.
Then fly temptation, youth; resist, refrain!
Nor let me preach for ever and in vain! [7]

Next came a well-dress'd pair, who left their coach,
And made, in long procession, slow approach;
For this gay bride had many a female friend,
And youths were there, this favour'd youth t' attend:
Silent, nor wanting due respect, the crowd
Stood humbly round, and gratulation bow'd;
But not that silent crowd, in wonder fix'd,
Not numerous friends, who praise and envy mix'd,
Nor nymphs attending near to swell the pride
Of one more fair, the ever-smiling bride;
Nor that gay bride, adorn'd with every grace,
Nor love nor joy triumphant in her face,
Could from the youth's sad signs of sorrow chase:
Why didst thou grieve? wealth, pleasure, freedom thine;
Vex'd it thy soul, that freedom to resign?
Spake Scandal truth? "Thou didst not then intend
"So soon to bring thy wooing to an end?"
Or, was it, as our prating rustics say,
To end as soon, but in a different way?
'Tis told thy Phillis is a skilful dame,
Who play'd uninjured with the dangerous flame;
That, while, like Lovelace, thou thy coat display'd,
And hid the snare for her affection laid,
Thee, with her net, she found the means to catch,
And at the amorous see-saw won the match: [8]
Yet others tell, the Captain fix'd thy doubt;
He 'd call thee brother, or he 'd call thee out:—
But rest the motive—all retreat too late,
Joy like thy bride's should on thy brow have sate;
The deed had then appear'd thine own intent,
A glorious day, by gracious fortune sent,
In each revolving year to be in triumph spent.
Then in few weeks that cloudy brow had been
Without a wonder or a whisper seen;
And none had been so weak as to inquire,
"Why pouts my Lady?" or "Why frowns the Squire?"

How fair these names, how much unlike they look
To all the blurr'd subscriptions in my book:
The bridegroom's letters stand in row above,
Tapering yet stout, like pine-trees in his grove;
While free and fine the bride's appear below,
As light and slender as her jasmines grow.
Mark now in what confusion stoop or stand
The crooked scrawls of many a clownish hand;
Now out, now in, they droop, they fall, they rise,
Like raw recruits drawn forth for exercise;
Ere yet reform'd and modell'd by the drill,
The free-born legs stand striding as they will.
Much have I tried to guide the fist along,
But still the blunderers placed their blottings wrong:
Behold these marks uncouth! how strange that men
Who guide the plough, should fail to guide the pen:

[7] [The tale of Phœbe Dawson, as the preface (*ante*, p. 99) shows, was one of the passages in the Parish Register which most interested Mr. Fox on his death-bed. The Monthly Review of 1807 observes:—"The circumstance stated in the preface to this poem, would, in our minds, communicate a high degree of interest to compositions far inferior in quality to those now before us. It is no mean panegyric on a literary effort, that it could at any period of his life command the applause of Mr. Fox; but, to have amused and occupied the painful leisure of his last illness, is as honourable to the powers as it must be delightful to the feelings of the author. If the beautiful dramas of Terence derive an additional power of pleasing, from our knowledge that they were sanctioned by the approbation and assistance of Scipio and Lælius, Englishmen will *feel* a similar predilection for works that have received praise and improvement from the *mitis sapientia* of the most amiable among the great men recorded in their history;" and Mr. Lockhart, in the Quarterly Review, No. C., says, "The last piece of poetry that soothed and occupied the dying ear of Mr. Fox, was Crabbe's tale of Phœbe Dawson; and we are enabled to offer testimony, not more equivocal, of the sincerity of Sir Walter Scott's worship of his genius. Crabbe's poems were at all times more frequently in his hands than any other work whatever, except Shakspeare; and during the few intervals after his return to Abbotsford, in 1832, when he was sufficiently himself to ask his family to read aloud to him, the only books he ever called for were his Bible and his Crabbe."]

[8] Clarissa, vol. vii.: Lovelace's Letters.

For half a mile the furrows even lie;
For half an inch the letters stand awry;—
Our peasants, strong and sturdy in the field,
Cannot these arms of idle students wield:
Like them, in feudal days, their valiant lords
Resign'd the pen and grasp'd their conqu'ring swords;
They to robed clerks and poor dependent men
Left the light duties of the peaceful pen;
Nor to their ladies wrote, but sought to prove,
By deeds of death, their hearts were fill'd with love.
But yet, small arts have charms for female eyes;
Our rustic nymphs the beau and scholar prize;
Unletter'd swains and ploughmen coarse they slight,
For those who dress, and amorous scrolls indite.

For *Lucy Collins* happier days had been,
Had Footman Daniel scorn'd his native green,
Or when he came an idle coxcomb down,
Had he his love reserved for lass in town;
To Stephen Hill she then had pledged her truth,—
A sturdy, sober, kind, unpolish'd youth;
But from the day, that fatal day she spied
The pride of Daniel, Daniel was her pride.
In all concerns was Stephen just and true;
But coarse his doublet was and patch'd in view,
And felt his stockings were, and blacker than his shoe;
While Daniel's linen all was fine and fair,—
His master wore it, and he deign'd to wear:
(To wear his livery, some respect might prove;
To wear his linen, must be sign of love:)
Blue was his coat, unsoil'd by spot or stain;
His hose were silk, his shoes of Spanish grain;
A silver knot his breadth of shoulder bore;
A diamond buckle blazed his breast before—
Diamond he swore it was! and show'd it as he swore;
Rings on his fingers shone; his milk-white hand
Could pick-tooth case and box for snuff command:
And thus, with clouded cane, a fop complete,
He stalk'd, the jest and glory of the street.
Join'd with these powers, he could so sweetly sing,
Talk with such toss, and saunter with such swing;
Laugh with such glee, and trifle with such art,
That Lucy's promise fail'd to shield her heart.
Stephen, meantime, to ease his amorous cares,
Fix'd his full mind upon his farm's affairs;
Two pigs, a cow, and wethers half a score,
Increased his stock, and still he look'd for more.
He, for his acres few, so duly paid,
That yet more acres to his lot were laid;
Till our chaste nymphs no longer felt disdain,
And prudent matrons praised the frugal swain;
Who thriving well, through many a fruitful year,
Now clothed himself anew, and acted overseer.
Just then poor Lucy, from her friend in town
Fled in pure fear, and came a beggar down;
Trembling, at Stephen's door she knock'd for bread,—
Was chidden first, next pitied, and then fed;
Then sat at Stephen's board, then shared in Stephen's bed:
All hope of marriage lost in her disgrace,
He mourns a flame revived, and she a love of lace.

Now to be wed a well-match'd couple came;
Twice had old *Lodge* been tied, and twice the dame;
Tottering they came and toying, (odious scene!)
And fond and simple, as they'd always been.
Children from wedlock we by laws restrain;
Why not prevent them when they're such again?
Why not forbid the doting souls to prove
Th' indecent fondling of preposterous love?
In spite of prudence, uncontroll'd by shame,
The amorous senior woos the toothless dame,
Relating idly, at the closing eve,
The youthful follies he disdains to leave;
Till youthful follies wake a transient fire,
When arm in arm they totter and retire.
So a fond pair of solemn birds, all day
Blink in their seat and doze the hours away;
Then by the moon awaken'd, forth they move,
And fright the songsters with their cheerless love:
So two sear trees, dry, stunted, and unsound,
Each other catch, when dropping to the ground:
Entwine their wither'd arms 'gainst wind and weather,
And shake their leafless heads and drop together:
So two cold limbs, touch'd by Galvani's wire,[9]
Move with new life, and feel awaken'd fire;
Quivering awhile, their flaccid forms remain,
Then turn to cold torpidity again.

"But ever frowns your Hymen? man and maid,
"Are all repenting, suffering, or betray'd?"
Forbid it, Love! we have our couples here
Who hail the day in each revolving year:
These are with us, as in the world around;
They are not frequent, but they may be found.
Our farmers too, what though they fail to prove,
In Hymen's bonds, the tenderest slaves of love,
(Nor, like those pairs whom sentiment unites,
Feel they the fervour of the mind's delights;)
Yet coarsely kind and comfortably gay,
They heap the board and hail the happy day:
And though the bride, now freed from school, admits,
Of pride implanted there, some transient fits;
Yet soon she casts her girlish flights aside,
And in substantial blessings rest her pride.
No more she moves in measured steps; no more
Runs, with bewilder'd ear, her music o'er;
No more recites her French the hinds among,
But chides her maidens in her mother-tongue;
Her tambour-frame she leaves and diet spare,
Plain work and plenty with her house to share;
Till, all her varnish lost in few short years,
In all her worth the farmer's wife appears.
Yet not the ancient kind; nor she who gave
Her soul to gain—a mistress and a slave:
Who, not to sleep allow'd the needful time;
To whom repose was loss, and sport a crime;
Who, in her meanest room (and all were mean),
A noisy drudge, from morn till night was seen;—
But she, the daughter, boasts a decent room,
Adorned with carpet, formed in Wilton's loom;
Fair prints along the paper'd wall are spread;
There, Werter sees the sportive children fed,[10]
And Charlotte, here, bewails her lover dead.

[9] [Luigi Galvani, professor of experimental philosophy at Bologna, from whom *Galvanism* takes its name, died in 1798.]

[10] ["I saw six children, all jumping round a young woman, very elegantly shaped, and dressed in a plain white

'T is here, assembled, while in space apart
Their husbands, drinking, warm the opening heart,
Our neighbouring dames, on festal days, unite,
With tongues more fluent and with hearts as light;
Theirs is that art, which English wives alone
Profess—a boast and privilege their own;
An art it is where each at once attends
To all, and claims attention from her friends,
When they engage the tongue, the eye, the ear,
Reply when list'ning, and when speaking hear:
The ready converse knows no dull delays,
"But double are the pains, and double be the praise." [11]

Yet not to those alone who bear command
Heaven gives a heart to hail the marriage band;
Among their servants, we the pairs can show,
Who much to love, and more to prudence owe:
Reuben and *Rachel*, though as found as doves,
Were yet discreet and cautious in their loves;
Nor would attend to Cupid's wild commands,
Till cool reflection bade them join their hands:
When both were poor, they thought it argued ill
Of hasty love to make them poorer still;
Year after year, with savings long laid by,
They bought the future dwelling's full supply;
Her frugal fancy cull'd the smaller ware,
The weightier purchase ask'd her Reuben's care;
Together then their last year's gain they threw,
And lo! an auction'd bed, with curtains neat and new.

Thus both, as prudence counsell'd, wisely stay'd,
And cheerful then the calls of Love obey'd:
What if, when Rachael gave her hand, 't was one
Embrown'd by Winter's ice and Summer's sun?
What if, in Reuben's hair the female eye
Usurping grey among the black could spy?
What if, in both, life's bloomy flush was lost,
And their full autumn felt the mellowing frost?
Yet time, who blow'd the rose of youth away,
Had left the vigorous stem without decay;
Like those tall elms in Farmer Frankford's ground,
They'll grow no more,—but all their growth is sound;
By time confirm'd and rooted in the land,
The storms they 've stood, still promise they shall stand.

These are the happier pairs, their life has rest,
Their hopes are strong, their humble portion blest.
While those more rash to hasty marriage led,
Lament th' impatience which now stints their bread:
When such their union, years their cares increase,
Their love grows colder, and their pleasures cease;
In health just fed, in sickness just relieved;
By hardships harass'd and by children grieved;
In petty quarrels and in peevish strife
The once fond couple waste the spring of life;
But when to age mature those children grown,
Find hopes and homes and hardships of their own,
The harass'd couple feel their lingering woes
Receding slowly, till they find repose.

Complaints and murmurs then are laid aside,
(By reason these subdued, and those by pride;)
And, taught by care, the patient man and wife
Agree to share the bitter-sweet of life;
(Life that has sorrow much and sorrow's cure,
Where they who most enjoy shall much endure:)
Their rest, their labours, duties, sufferings, prayers,
Compose the soul, and fit it for its cares;
Their graves before them and their griefs behind,
Have each a med'cine for the rustic mind;
Nor has he care to whom his wealth shall go,
Or who shall labour with his spade and hoe;
But as he lends the strength that yet remains,
And some dead neighbour on his bier sustains,
(One with whom oft he whirl'd the bounding flail,
Toss'd the broad coit, or took th' inspiring ale,)
"For me," (he meditates,) "shall soon be done
"This friendly duty, when my race be run;
"'T was first in trouble as in error pass'd,
"Dark clouds and stormy cares whole years o'ercast,
"But calm my setting day, and sunshine smiles at last:
"My vices punish'd and my follies spent,
"Not loth to die, but yet to live content,
"I rest:"—then casting on the grave his eye,
His friend compels a tear, and his own griefs a sigh.

Last on my list appears a match of love,
And one of virtue;—happy may it prove!—
Sir *Edward Archer* is an amorous knight,
And maidens chaste and lovely shun his sight;
His bailiff's daughter suited much his taste,
For *Fanny Price* was lovely and was chaste;
To her the Knight with gentle looks drew near,
And timid voice assumed to banish fear:—
"Hope of my life, dear sovereign of my breast,
"Which, since I knew thee, knows not joy nor rest;
"Know, thou art all that my delighted eyes,
"My fondest thoughts, my proudest wishes prize;
"And is that bosom—(what on earth so fair!)
"To cradle some coarse peasant's sprawling heir,
"To be that pillow which some surly swain
"May treat with scorn and agonise with pain?
"Art thou, sweet maid, a ploughman's wants to share,
"To dread his insult, to support his care;
"To hear his follies, his contempt to prove,
"And (oh! the torment!) to endure his love;
"Till want and deep regret those charms destroy,
"That time would spare, if time were pass'd in joy?
"With him, in varied pains, from morn till night,
"Your hours shall pass; yourself a ruffian's right;
"Your softest bed shall be the knotted wool;
"Your purest drink the waters of the pool;
"Your sweetest food will but your life sustain,
"And your best pleasure be a rest from pain;
"While, through each year, as health and strength abate,
"You 'll weep your woes and wonder at your fate;

gown with pink ribands. She had a brown loaf in her hand, and was cutting slices of bread and butter, which she distributed, in a graceful manner, to the children. Each held up its little hands," &c. &c.—WERTER.]

11 Spenser.

" And cry, 'Behold,' as life's last cares come on,
" 'My burthens growing when my strength is gone.'
" Now turn with me, and all the young desire,
" That taste can form, that fancy can require;
" All that excites enjoyment, or procures
" Wealth, health, respect, delight, and love, are yours:
" Sparkling, in cups of gold, your wines shall flow,
" Grace that fair hand, in that dear bosom glow;
" Fruits of each clime, and flowers, through all the year,
" Shall on your walls and in your walks appear:
" Where all beholding, shall your praise repeat,
" No fruit so tempting and no flower so sweet:
" The softest carpets in your rooms shall lie,
" Pictures of happiest love shall meet your eye,
" And tallest mirrors, reaching to the floor,
" Shall show you all the object I adore;
" Who, by the hands of wealth and fashion dress'd,
" By slaves attended and by friends caress'd,
" Shall move, a wonder, through the public ways,
" And hear the whispers of adoring praise.
" Your female friends, though gayest of the gay,
" Shall see you happy, and shall, sighing, say,
" While smother'd envy rises in the breast,—
" 'Oh! that we lived so beauteous and so blest!'
" Come, then, my mistress, and my wife; for she,
" Who trusts my honour is the wife for me;
" Your slave, your husband, and your friend employ
" In search of pleasures we may both enjoy."
To this the Damsel, meekly firm, replied:
" My mother loved, was married, toil'd, and died;
" With joys, she 'd griefs, had troubles in her course,
" But not one grief was pointed by remorse:
" My mind is fix'd, to Heaven I resign,
" And be her love, her life, her comforts mine."
Tyrants have wept; and those with hearts of steel,
Unused the anguish of the heart to heal,
Have yet the transient power of virtue known,
And felt th' imparted joy promote their own.
Our Knight relenting, now befriends a youth,
Who to the yielding maid had vow'd his truth;
And finds in that fair deed a sacred joy,
That will not perish, and that cannot cloy;—
A living joy, that shall its spirits keep,
When every beauty fades, and all the passions sleep.

[1] ["That man who feareth not the fickle fates a strawe,
The visage grim of Acheront whose eyes yet never saw,
That person is a prince's peere, and like the gods in might."
NEWTON, 1581.]

[2] ["There is nothing in history," says Addison, "which is so improving to the reader as those accounts which we meet with of the deaths of eminent persons, and of their behaviour in that dreadful season. I may also add, that there are no parts in history which affect and please the reader in so sensible a manner. The reason I take to be this: there is no other single circumstance in the story of any person, which can possibly be the case of every one who reads it. The general, the statesman, or the philosopher, are, perhaps, characters which we may never act in; but the dying man is one whom, sooner or later, we shall certainly resemble. It is, perhaps, for the same kind of reason that few books have been so much perused as Dr. Sherlock's Discourse upon Death; though, at the same time, I must own, that he who has not perused this excellent piece has not read one of the strongest persuasives to a religious life that ever was written in any language."—When Addison found the end of his own useful life approaching, he directed his son-in-law, the Earl of Warwick, to be called; and when the young lord desired, with great tenderness, to hear his last injunctions, told him, "I have sent for you, that you may see how a Christian can die." In Tickell's beautiful elegy on his friend there are these lines in allusion to this moving interview:—

" He taught us how to live; and oh! too high
The price of knowledge! taught us how to die."]

PART III.

Qui vultus Acherontis atri,
Qui Stygia tristem, non tristis, videt,—
Par ille Regi, par Superis erit.
SENECA *in Agamem.*[1]

BURIALS.

True Christian Resignation not frequently to be seen—The Register a melancholy Record—A dying Man, who at length sends for a Priest: for what Purpose? answered—Old Collett of the Inn, an Instance of Dr. Young's slow-sudden Death: his Character and Conduct—The Manners and Management of the Widow Goe: her successful Attention to Business: her Decease unexpected—the Infant-Boy of Gerard Ablett dies: Reflections on his Death, and the Survivor his Sister-Twin—The Funeral of the deceased Lady of the Manor described: her neglected Mansion: Undertaker and Train: the Character which her Monument will hereafter display—Burial of an Ancient Maiden: some former drawback on her Virgin Fame: Description of her House and Household: her Manners, Apprehensions, Death—Isaac Ashford, a virtuous Peasant, dies: his manly Character: Reluctance to enter the Poor-House; and why—Misfortune and Derangement of Intellect in Robin Dingley: whence they proceeded: he is not restrained by Misery from a wandering Life: his various returns to his Parish: his final Return—Wife of Farmer Frankford dies in Prime of Life: Affliction in Consequence of such Death: melancholy View of Her House, &c. on her Family's Return from her Funeral: Address to Sorrow—Leah Cousins, a Midwife: her Character; and successful Practice: at length opposed by Dr. Glibb: Opposition in the Parish: Argument of the Doctor; of Leah: her Failure and Decease—Burial of Roger Cuff, a Sailor: his Enmity to his Family; how it originated:—his Experiment and its Consequence—The Register terminates—A Bell heard: Inquiry for whom? The Sexton—Character of old Dibble, and the five Rectors whom he served—Reflections—Conclusion.

THERE was, 't is said, and I believe, a time
When humble Christians died with views sublime;
When all were ready for their faith to bleed,
But few to write or wrangle for their creed;
When lively Faith upheld the sinking heart,
And friends, assured to meet, prepared to part;
When Love felt hope, when Sorrow grew serene,
And all was comfort in the death-bed scene.[2]
Alas! when now the gloomy king they wait,
'T is weakness yielding to resistless fate;
Like wretched men upon the ocean cast,
They labour hard and struggle to the last;

"Hope against hope," and wildly gaze around,
In search of help that never shall be found:
Nor, till the last strong billow stops the breath,
Will they believe them in the jaws of Death!

When these my Records I reflecting read,
And find what ills these numerous births succeed;
What powerful griefs these nuptial ties attend;
With what regret these painful journeys end;
When from the cradle to the grave I look,
Mine I conceive a melancholy book.
Where now is perfect resignation seen?
Alas! it is not on the village-green:—
I've seldom known, though I have often read,
Of happy peasants on their dying-bed;
Whose looks proclaim'd that sunshine of the breast,
That more than hope, that Heaven itself express'd.
What I behold are feverish fits of strife,
'Twixt fears of dying and desire of life:[3]
Those earthly hopes, that to the last endure;
Those fears, that hopes superior fail to cure;
At best a sad submission to the doom,
Which, turning from the danger, lets it come.[4]

Sick lies the man, bewilder'd, lost, afraid,
His spirits vanquish'd and his strength decay'd;
No hope the friend, the nurse, the doctor lend—
"Call then a priest, and fit him for his end."
A priest is call'd; 'tis now, alas! too late,
Death enters with him at the cottage-gate;
Or time allow'd—he goes, assured to find
The self-commending, all-confiding mind;
And sighs to hear, what we may justly call
Death's common-place, the train of thought in all.
"True I'm a sinner," feebly he begins,
"But trust in Mercy to forgive my sins:"
(Such cool confession no past crimes excite!
Such claim on Mercy seems the sinner's right!)
"I know mankind are frail, that God is just,
"And pardons those who in his mercy trust;
"We 're sorely tempted in a world like this—
"All men have done, and I like all, amiss;
"But now, if spared, it is my full intent
"On all the past to ponder and repent:
"Wrongs against me I pardon great and small,
"And if I die, I die in peace with all."
His merits thus and not his sins confess'd,
He speaks his hopes, and leaves to Heaven the rest.
Alas! are these the prospects, dull and cold,
That dying Christians to their priests unfold?
Or mends the prospect when th' enthusiast cries,
"I die assured!" and in a rapture dies?
Ah, where that humble, self-abasing mind,
With that confiding spirit, shall we find;
The mind that, feeling what repentance brings,
Dejection's terrors and Contrition's stings,
Feels then the hope that mounts all care above,
And the pure joy that flows from pardoning love?
Such have I seen in Death, and much deplore,
So many dying—that I see no more:
Lo! now my Records, where I grieve to trace
How Death has triumph'd in so short a space;
Who are the dead, how died they, I relate,
And snatch some portion of their acts from fate.[5]

With *Andrew Collett*[6] we the year begin,
The blind, fat landlord of the Old Crown Inn,—
Big as his butt, and, for the self-same use,
To take in stores of strong fermenting juice.
On his huge chair beside the fire he sate,
In revel chief, and umpire in debate;
Each night his string of vulgar tales he told,
When ale was cheap and bachelors were bold:
His heroes all were famous in their days,
Cheats were his boast and drunkards had his praise;
"One, in three draughts, three mugs of ale took down,
"As mugs were then—the champion of the Crown;
"For thrice three days another lived on ale,
"And knew no change but that of mild and stale;
"Two thirsty soakers watch'd a vessel's side,
"When he the tap, with dext'rous hand, applied;
"Nor from their seats departed, till they found
"That butt was out and heard the mournful sound."
He praised a poacher, precious child of fun!
Who shot the keeper with his own spring-gun;
Nor less the smuggler who the exciseman tied,
And left him hanging at the birch-wood side,
There to expire;—but one who saw him hang
Cut the good cord—a traitor of the gang.
His own exploits with boastful glee he told,
What ponds he emptied and what pikes he sold;
And how, when blest with sight alert and gay,
The night's amusements kept him through the day.
He sang the praises of those times, when all
"For cards and dice, as for their drink, might call;
"When justice wink'd on every jovial crew,
"And ten-pins tumbled in the parson's view."
He told, when angry wives, provoked to rail,
Or drive a third-day drunkard from his ale,

[3] ["Surely, to the sincere believer, death would be an object of desire instead of dread, were it not for those ties—those heart-strings—by which we are attached to life. Nor, indeed, do I believe that it is natural to fear death, however generally it may be thought so. From my own feelings I have little right to judge; for, although habitually mindful that the hour cometh, and even now may be, it has never appeared actually near enough to make me duly apprehend its effect upon myself. But from what I have observed, and what I have heard those persons say whose professions led them to the dying, I am induced to infer, that the fear of death is not common, and that where it exists, it proceeds rather from a diseased or enfeebled mind, than from any principle in our nature. Certain it is, that among the poor the approach of dissolution is usually regarded with a quiet and natural composure which it is consolatory to contemplate, and which is as far removed from the dead palsy of unbelief, as it is from the delirious raptures of fanaticism. *Theirs* is a true unhesitating faith; and they are willing to lay down the burden of a weary life, in the sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality."—Southey.]

[4] ["Of the great number to whom it has been my painful professional duty to have administered in the last hours of their lives, I have sometimes felt surprised that so few have appeared reluctant to go to 'the undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns!' Many, we may easily suppose, have manifested this willingness to die from an impatience of suffering, or from that passive indifference which is sometimes the result of debility and extreme bodily exhaustion. But I have seen those who have arrived at a fearless contemplation of the future, from faith in the doctrine which our religion teaches. Such men were not only calm and supported, but cheerful, in the hour of death; and I never quitted such a sick chamber, without a wish that 'my last end might be like theirs.'"—Sir Henry Halford.]

[5] ["Oh! snatch some portion of these acts from fate,
Celestial Muse! and to our world relate."
Pope's *Homer*.]

[6] [Phœbe Dawson, Andrew Collett, and the Widow Goe, were all portraits from the life.]

What were his triumphs, and how great the skill
That won the vex'd virago to his will;
Who raving came;—then talked in milder strain,—
Then wept, then drank, and pledged her spouse again.
Such were his themes: how knaves o'er laws prevail,
Or, when made captives, how they fly from jail;
The young how brave, how subtle were the old:
And oaths attested all that Folly told.
On death like his what name shall we bestow,
So very sudden! yet so very slow?
'T was slow:—Disease, augmenting year by year,
Show'd the grim king by gradual steps brought near:
'T was not less sudden; in the night he died,
He drank, he swore, he jested, and he lied;
Thus aiding folly with departing breath:—
"Beware, Lorenzo,[7] the slow-sudden death." [8]

Next died *the Widow Goe*, an active dame,
Famed ten miles round, and worthy all her fame;
She lost her husband when their loves were young,
But kept her farm, her credit, and her tongue:
Full thirty years she ruled, with matchless skill,
With guiding judgment and resistless will;
Advice she scorn'd, rebellions she suppress'd,
And sons and servants bow'd at her behest.
Like that great man's, who to his Saviour came,
Were the strong words of this commanding dame;—
"Come," if she said, they came; if "Go," were gone; [9]
And if "Do this,"—that instant it was done:
Her maidens told she was all eye and ear,
In darkness saw and could at distance hear;
No parish-business in the place could stir,
Without direction or assent from her;
In turn she took each office as it fell,
Knew all their duties and discharged them well;
The lazy vagrants in her presence shook,
And pregnant damsels fear'd her stern rebuke;
She look'd on want with judgment clear and cool,
And felt with reason and bestow'd by rule;
She match'd both sons and daughters to her mind,
And lent them eyes, for Love, she heard, was blind;
Yet ceaseless still she throve, alert, alive,
The working bee, in full or empty hive;
Busy and careful, like that working bee,
No time for love nor tender cares had she;
But when our farmers made their amorous vows,
She talk'd of market-steeds and patent-ploughs.
Not unemploy'd her evenings pass'd away,
Amusement closed, as business waked the day;
When to her toilet's brief concern she ran,
And conversation with her friends began,
Who all were welcome, what they saw, to share;
And joyous neighbours praised her Christmas fare,
That none around might, in their scorn, complain
Of Gossip Goe as greedy in her gain.

Thus long she reign'd, admired, if not approved;
Praised, if not honour'd; fear'd, if not beloved;—
When, as the busy days of Spring drew near,
That call'd for all the forecast of the year;
When lively hope the rising crops survey'd,
And April promised what September paid;
When stray'd her lambs where gorse and greenweed grow;
When rose her grass in richer vales below;
When pleased she look'd on all the smiling land,
And view'd the hinds, who wrought at her command;
(Poultry in groups still follow'd where she went;)
Then dread o'ercame her,—that her days were spent.
"Bless me! I die, and not a warning giv'n,—
"With *much* to do on Earth, and ALL for Heav'n!—
"No reparation for my soul's affairs,
"No leave petition'd for the barn's repairs;
"Accounts perplex'd, my interest yet unpaid,
"My mind unsettled, and my will unmade;—
"A lawyer haste, and in your way, a priest;
"And let me die in one good work at least."
She spake, and, trembling, dropp'd upon her knees,
Heaven in her eye and in her hand her keys;
And still the more she found her life decay,
With greater force she grasp'd those signs of sway:
Then fell and died!—In haste her sons drew near,
And dropp'd, in haste, the tributary tear;
Then from th' adhering clasp the keys unbound,
And consolation for their sorrows found.
Death has his infant-train; his bony arm
Strikes from the baby-cheek the rosy charm;
The brightest eye his glazing film makes dim,
And his cold touch sets fast the lithest limb:
He seized the sick'ning boy to *Gerard* lent,[10]
When three days' life, in feeble cries, were spent;
In pain brought forth, those painful hours to stay,
To breathe in pain and sigh its soul away!
"But why thus lent, if thus recall'd again,
"To cause and feel, to live and die in, pain?"
Or rather say, Why grievous these appear,
If all it pays for Heaven's eternal year;
If these sad sobs and piteous sighs secure
Delights that live, when worlds no more endure?
The sister-spirit long may lodge below,
And pains from nature, pains from reason, know;
Through all the common ills of life may run,
By hope perverted and by love undone;
A wife's distress, a mother's pangs, may dread,
And widow-tears, in bitter anguish, shed;
May at old age arrive through numerous harms,
With children's children in those feeble arms:
Nor till by years of want and grief oppress'd
Shall the sad spirit flee and be at rest!
Yet happier therefore shall we deem the boy,
Secured from anxious care and dangerous joy? [11]
Not so! for then would Love Divine in vain
Send all the burthens weary men sustain;

[7] [Young's Night Thoughts.]

[8] ["It has always appeared to me as one of the most striking passages in the visions of Quevedo, that which stigmatises those as fools who complain that they failed of happiness by sudden death. 'How,' says he, 'can death be sudden to a being who always knew that he must die, and that the time of his death was uncertain?'"—JOHNSON.]

[9] ["And I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh."—*Matt.* viii. 9.]

[10] Gerard Ablett, see *anté*, p. 137.

[11] ["'Whom the gods love, die young,' was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays even more,
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is

All that now curb the passions when they rage,
The checks of youth and the regrets of age;
All that now bid us hope, believe, endure,
Our sorrow's comfort and our vice's cure;
All that for Heaven's high joys the spirits train,
And charity, the crown of all, were vain.
Say, will you call the breathless infant blest,
Because no cares the silent grave molest?
So would you deem the nursling from the wing
Untimely thrust and never train'd to sing;
But far more blest the bird whose grateful voice
Sings its own joy and makes the woods rejoice,
Though, while untaught, ere yet he charm'd the ear,
Hard were his trials and his pains severe!

Next died the LADY who yon Hall possess'd,
And here they brought her noble bones to rest.
In Town she dwelt;—forsaken stood the Hall:
Worms ate the floors, the tap'stry fled the wall:
No fire the kitchen's cheerless grate display'd;
No cheerful light the long-closed sash convey'd:
The crawling worm, that turns a summer fly,
Here spun his shroud and laid him up to die
The winter-death:—upon the bed of state,
The bat shrill shrieking woo'd his flickering mate;
To empty rooms the curious came no more;
From empty cellars turn'd the angry poor,
And surly beggars cursed the ever-bolted door.
To one small room the steward found his way,
Where tenants follow'd to complain and pay;[12]
Yet no complaint before the Lady came,
The feeling servant spared the feeble dame;
Who saw her farms with his observing eyes,
And answer'd all requests with his replies:—
She came not down, her falling groves to view;
Why should she know, what one so faithful knew?
Why come, from many clamorous tongues to hear,
What one so just might whisper in her ear?
Her oaks or acres, why with care explore;
Why learn the wants, the sufferings of the poor;
When one so knowing all their worth could trace,
And one so piteous govern'd in her place?[13]
Lo! now, what dismal Sons of Darkness come,
To bear this Daughter of Indulgence home;
Tragedians all, and well-arranged in black!
Who nature, feeling, force, expression lack;
Who cause no tear, but gloomily pass by,
And shake their sables in the wearied eye,
That turns disgusted from the pompous scene,
Proud without grandeur, with profusion, mean!
The tear for kindness past affection owes;
For worth deceased the sigh from reason flows;
E'en well-feign'd passion for our sorrows call,
And real tears for mimic miseries fall:
But this poor farce has neither truth nor art,
To please the fancy or to touch the heart;

Except mere breath; and since the silent shore
Awaits at last even those who longest miss
The old archer's arrow, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save."
BYRON.]

[12] ["This description of the lady of the manor's deserted mansion is very striking, and in the good old taste of Pope and Dryden."—JEFFREY.]

[13] ["Absenteeism, all the world over, is the greatest of evils that can befall a labouring population. "While," says Mr. Lewis, "I fancied my attorney to be resident on my estate, he was attending to one of his own. During his absence, an overseer was left in absolute power, which he abused to such a degree, that the property was nearly ruined. Yet, while all this was going on, my attorney wrote me letters filled with assurances of his perpetual vigilance for the poor creatures' welfare; nor, if I had not witnessed it myself, should I ever have had the most distant idea how abominably they had been misused."—*Quarterly Review*, 1834.]

Unlike the darkness of the sky, that pours
On the dry ground its fertilising showers;
Unlike to that which strikes the soul with dread,
When thunders roar and forky fires are shed;
Dark but not awful, dismal but yet mean,
With anxious bustle moves the cumbrous scene;
Presents no objects tender or profound,
But spreads its cold unmeaning gloom around.
When woes are feign'd, how ill such forms appear,
And oh! how needless, when the woe 's sincere.
Slow to the vault they come, with heavy tread,
Bending beneath the Lady and her lead;
A case of elm surrounds that ponderous chest,
Close on that case the crimson velvet 's press'd;
Ungenerous this, that to the worm denies,
With niggard-caution, his appointed prize;
For now, ere yet he works his tedious way,
Through cloth and wood and metal to his prey,
That prey dissolving shall a mass remain,
That fancy loathes and worms themselves disdain.
But see! the master-mourner makes his way,
To end his office for the coffin'd clay;
Pleased that our rustic men and maids behold
His plate like silver, and his studs like gold,
As they approach to spell the age, the name,
And all the titles of the illustrious dame.—
This as (my duty done) some scholar read,
A Village-father look'd disdain and said:
"Away, my friends! why take such pains to know
"What some brave marble soon in church shall show?
"Where not alone her gracious name shall stand,
"But how she lived—the blessing of the land;
"How much we all deplored the noble dead,
"What groans we utter'd and what tears we shed;
"Tears, true as those which in the sleepy eyes
"Of weeping cherubs on the stone shall rise;
"Tears, true as those which, ere she found her grave,
"The noble Lady to our sorrows gave."

Down by the church-way walk, and where the brook
Winds round the chancel like a shepherd's crook;
In that small house, with those green pales before,
Where jasmine trails on either side the door;
Where those dark shrubs, that now grow wild at will,
Were clipp'd in form and tantalised with skill;
Where cockles blanch'd and pebbles neatly spread,
Form'd shining borders for the larkspurs' bed;—
There lived a Lady, wise, austere, and nice,
Who show'd her virtue by her scorn of vice;
In the dear fashions of her youth she dress'd,
A pea-green Joseph[14] was her favourite vest;

[14] [A lady's great-coat.]

Erect she stood, she walk'd with stately mien,
Tight was her length of stays, and she was tall and lean.
There long she lived in maiden-state immured,
From looks of love and treacherous man secured;
Though evil fame—(but that was long before)
Had blown her dubious blast at *Catherine's* door:
A Captain thither, rich from India came,
And though a *cousin* call'd, it touch'd her fame:
Her annual stipend rose from his behest,
And all the long-prized treasures she possess'd:—
If aught like joy awhile appear'd to stay
In that stern face, and chase those frowns away,
'T was when her treasures she disposed for view
And heard the praises to their splendour due;
Silks beyond price, so rich, they 'd stand alone,
And diamonds blazing on the buckled zone;
Rows of rare pearls by curious workmen set,
And bracelets fair in box of glossy jet;
Bright polish'd amber precious from its size,
Or forms the fairest fancy could devise:
Her drawers of cedar, shut with secret springs,
Conceal'd the watch of gold and rubied rings;
Letters, long proofs of love, and verses fine
Round the pink'd rims of crisped Valentine.
Her china-closet, cause of daily care,
For woman's wonder held her pencill'd ware;
That pictured wealth of China and Japan,
Like its cold mistress, shunn'd the eye of man.
Her neat small room, adorn'd with maiden-taste,
A clipp'd French puppy, first of favourites, graced:
A parrot next, but dead and stuff'd with art;
(For Poll, when living, lost the Lady's heart,
And then his life; for he was heard to speak
Such frightful words as tinged his Lady's cheek:)
Unhappy bird! who had no power to prove,
Save by such speech, his gratitude and love.
A grey old cat his whiskers lick'd beside;
A type of sadness in the house of pride.
The polish'd surface of an India chest,
A glassy globe, in frame of ivory, press'd;
Where swam two finny creatures; one of gold,
Of silver one; both beauteous to behold:—
All these were form'd the guiding taste to suit;
The beast well-manner'd and the fishes mute.
A widow'd Aunt was there, compell'd by need
The nymph to flatter and her tribe to feed;
Who veiling well her scorn, endured the clog,
Mute as the fish and fawning as the dog.
As years increased, these treasures, her delight,
Arose in value in their owner's sight:
A miser knows that, view it as he will,
A guinea kept is but a guinea still;
And so he puts it to its proper use,
That something more this guinea may produce;
But silks and rings, in the possessor's eyes,
The oft'ner seen, the more in value rise,
And thus are wisely hoarded to bestow
The kind of pleasure that with years will grow.
But what avail'd their worth—if worth had they—
In the sad summer of her slow decay?
Then we beheld her turn an anxious look
From trunks and chests, and fix it on her book,—
A rich-bound Book of Prayer the Captain gave,
(Some Princess had it, or was said to have;)
And then once more on all her stores look round,
And draw a sigh so piteous and profound,
That told, "Alas! how hard from these to part,
"And for new hopes and habits form the heart!
"What shall I do (she cried), my peace of mind
"To gain in dying, and to die resign'd?"
"Hear," we return'd;—"these baubles cast aside,
"Nor give thy God a rival in thy pride;
"Thy closets shut, and ope thy kitchen's door;
"*There* own thy failings, *here* invite the poor;
"A friend of Mammon let thy bounty make;
"For widow's prayers, thy vanities forsake;
"And let the hungry of thy pride partake:
"Then shall thy inward eye with joy survey
"The angel Mercy tempering Death's delay!"
Alas! 't was hard; the treasures still had charms,
Hope still its flattery, sickness its alarms;
Still was the same unsettled, clouded view,
And the same plaintive cry, "What shall I do?"
Nor change appear'd; for when her race was run,
Doubtful we all exclaim'd, "What has been done?"
Apart she lived, and still she lies alone;
You earthy heap awaits the flattering stone
On which invention shall be long employ'd,
To show the various worth of *Catherine Lloyd*.—

Next to these ladies, but in nought allied,
A noble Peasant, *Isaac Ashford*, died.
Noble he was, contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestion'd and his soul serene:
Of no man's presence Isaac felt afraid;
At no man's question Isaac look'd dismay'd:
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no disgrace;
Truth, simple truth, was written in his face:
Yet while the serious thought his soul approved,
Cheerful he seem'd, and gentleness he loved;
To bliss domestic he his heart resign'd,
And with the firmest had the fondest mind:
Were others joyful, he look'd smiling on,
And gave allowance where he needed none;
Good he refused with future ill to buy,
Nor knew a joy that caused reflection's sigh;
A friend to virtue, his unclouded breast
No envy stung, no jealousy distress'd;
(Bane of the poor! it wounds their weaker mind,
To miss one favour, which their neighbours find:)
Yet far was he from stoic pride removed;
He felt humanely, and he warmly loved:
I mark'd his action, when his infant died,
And his old neighbour for offence was tried;
The still tears, stealing down that furrow'd cheek,
Spoke pity, plainer than the tongue can speak.
If pride were his, 't was not their vulgar pride,
Who, in their base contempt, the great deride;
Nor pride in learning,—though my Clerk agreed,
If fate should call him, Ashford might succeed;
Nor pride in rustic skill, although we knew
None his superior, and his equals few:—
But if that spirit in his soul had place,
It was the jealous pride that shuns disgrace;
A pride in honest fame, by virtue gain'd,
In sturdy boys to virtuous labours train'd;
Pride in the power that guards his country's coast,
And all that Englishmen enjoy and boast;
Pride in a life that slander's tongue defied,—
In fact a noble passion, misnamed Pride.
He had no party's rage, no sect'ry's whim;
Christian and countrymen was all with him:

True to his church he came; no Sunday-shower
Kept him at home in that important hour;
Nor his firm feet could one persuading sect,
By the strong glare of their new light direct;—
"On hope, in mine own sober light, I gaze,
"But should be blind, and lose it, in your blaze."
In times severe, when many a sturdy swain
Felt it his pride, his comfort, to complain;
Isaac their wants would soothe, his own would hide,
And feel in *that* his comfort and his pride.
At length he found, when seventy years were run,
His strength departed, and his labour done;
When he, save honest fame, retain'd no more,
But lost his wife, and saw his children poor:
'T was then, a spark of—say not discontent—
Struck on his mind, and thus he gave it vent:—
"Kind are your laws, ('t is not to be denied,)
"That in yon House, for ruin'd age, provide,
"And they are just;—when young we give you all,
"And for assistance in our weakness call.—
"Why then this proud reluctance to be fed,
"To join your poor, and eat the parish-bread?
"But yet I linger, loth with him to feed,
"Who gains his plenty by the sons of need;
"He who, by contract, all your paupers took,
"And gauges stomachs with an anxious look:
"On some old master I could well depend;
"See him with joy and thank him as a friend;
"But ill on him who doles the day's supply,
"And counts our chances who at night may die:
"Yet help me, Heav'n! and let me not complain
"Of what I suffer, but my fate sustain."
Such were his thoughts, and so resign'd he grew;
Daily he placed the Workhouse in his view!
But came not there, for sudden was his fate,
He dropp'd, expiring, at his cottage-gate.[15]
I feel his absence in the hours of prayer,
And view his seat, and sigh for Isaac there:
I see no more those white locks thinly spread
Round the bald polish of that honour'd head;
No more that awful glance on playful wight,
Compell'd to kneel and tremble at the sight,
To fold his fingers, all in dread the while,
Till Mister Ashford soften'd to a smile;
No more that meek and suppliant look in prayer,
Nor the pure faith (to give it force), are there:—
But he is blest, and I lament no more
A wise good man contented to be poor.

Then died a Rambler: not the one who sails,
And trucks, for female favours, beads and nails;
Not one who posts from place to place—of men
And manners treating with a flying pen;
Not he who climbs, for prospects, Snowdon's height,
And chides the clouds that intercept the sight;
No curious shell, rare plant, or brilliant spar,
Enticed our traveller from his house so far;
But all the reason, by himself assign'd
For so much rambling, was, a restless mind;
As on, from place to place, without intent,
Without reflection, *Robin Dingley*[16] went.
Not thus by nature:—never man was found
Less prone to wander from his parish bound:
Claudian's Old Man, to whom all scenes were new,[17]
Save those where he and where his apples grew,
Resembled Robin, who around would look,
And his horizon for the earth's mistook.
To this poor swain a keen Attorney came;—
"I give thee joy, good fellow! on thy name;
"The rich old Dingley's dead;—no child has he,
"Nor wife, nor will; his ALL is left for thee:
"To be his fortune's heir thy claim is good;
"Thou hast the name, and we will prove the blood."
The claim was made; 'twas tried,—it would not stand;
They proved the blood, but were refused the land.
Assured of wealth, this man of simple heart
To every friend had predisposed a part;
His wife had hopes indulged of various kind;
The three Miss Dingleys had their school assign'd,
Masters were sought for what they each required,
And books were bought and harpsichords were hired;
So high was hope:—the failure touch'd his brain,
And Robin never was himself again;
Yet he no wrath, no angry wish express'd,
But tried, in vain, to labour or to rest;
Then cast his bundle on his back, and went
He knew not whither, nor for what intent.
Years fled;—of Robin all remembrance past,
When home he wander'd in his rags at last:
A sailor's jacket on his limbs was thrown,
A sailor's story he had made his own;
Had suffer'd battles, prisons, tempests, storms,
Encountering death in all his ugliest forms:
His cheeks were haggard, hollow was his eye,
Where madness lurk'd, conceal'd in misery;
Want, and th' ungentle world, had taught a part,
And prompted cunning to that simple heart:
"He now bethought him, he would roam no more,
"But live at home and labour as before."
Here clothed and fed, no sooner he began
To round and redden, then away he ran;

[15] [Isaac Ashford's prototype was honest John Jasper, the parish-clerk of North Glemham: of whose manly independence of mind and integrity of conduct Mr. Crabbe often spoke with cordial warmth and respect, long after he had left Suffolk. John's only complaint was a dread of a workhouse, when his ability to labour should be over.]

[16] [Robin Dingley, the wandering pauper, was suggested by Richard Wilkinson, a parishioner of Muston, who every now and then disappeared, like some migratory birds, no one could conjecture whither, and, just as his existence was forgotten, home came Richard to be again clothed and fed at the expense of the parish.]

[17] [The Old man of Verona, "qui suburbium nunquam egressus est." Claudian's verses are thus imitated by Cowley:—

"Happy the man who his whole life doth bound
Within th' enclosure of his little ground;
Happy the man whom the same humble place
(Th' hereditary cottage of his race)
From his first rising infancy has known,
And, by degrees, sees gently bending down,
With natural propension, to that earth
Which both preserved his life and gave him birth.
Him no false distant lights, by fortune set,
Could ever into foolish wanderings get;
No change of consuls marks to him the year;
The change of seasons is his calendar," &c.]

His wife was dead, their children past his aid.
So, unmolested, from his home he stray'd:
Six years elapsed, when, worn with want and pain,
Came Robin, wrapt in all his rags, again:
We chide, we pity;—placed among our poor,
He fed again, and was a man once more.
As when a gaunt and hungry fox is found,
Entrapp'd alive in some rich hunter's ground;
Fed for the field, although each day 's a feast,
Fatten you may, but never *tame* the beast;
A house protects him, savoury viands sustain;—
But loose his neck and off he goes again:
So stole our Vagrant from his warm retreat,
To rove a prowler and be deemed a cheat.
Hard was his fare; for him at length we saw
In cart convey'd and laid supine on straw.
His feeble voice now spoke a sinking heart;
His groans now told the motions of the cart;
And when it stopp'd, he tried in vain to stand;
Closed was his eye, and clench'd his clammy hand;
Life ebb'd apace, and our best aid no more
Could his weak sense or dying heart restore:
But now he fell, a victim to the snare
That vile attorneys for the weak prepare;—
They who, when profit or resentment call,
Heed not the groaning victim they enthrall.

Then died lamented, in the strength of life,
A valued *Mother* and a faithful *Wife;*
Call'd not away when time had loosed each hold
On the fond heart, and each desire grew cold;
But when, to all that knit us to our kind,
She felt fast-bound, as charity can bind;—
Not when the ills of age, its pain, its care,
The drooping spirit for its fate prepare;
And, each affection failing, leaves the heart
Loosed from life's charm, and willing to depart;
But all her ties the strong invader broke,
In all their strength, by one tremendous stroke!
Sudden and swift the eager pest came on,
And terror grew, till every hope was gone;
Still those around appear'd for hope to seek!
But view'd the sick and were afraid to speak.
Slowly they bore, with solemn step, the dead;
When grief grew loud and bitter tears were shed,
My part began; a crowd drew near the place,
Awe in each eye, alarm in every face:
So swift the ill, and of so fierce a kind,
That fear with pity mingled in each mind;
Friends with the husband came their griefs to blend;
For good-man *Frankford* was to all a friend.
The last-born boy they held above the bier,
He knew not grief, but cries express'd his fear;
Each different age and sex reveal'd its pain,
In now a louder, now a lower strain;
While the meek father, listening to their tones,
Swell'd the full cadence of the grief by groans.
The elder sister strove her pangs to hide,
And soothing words to younger minds applied:
"Be still, be patient;" oft she strove to stay;
But fail'd as oft, and weeping turn'd away.
Curious and sad, upon the fresh-dug hill
The village lads stood melancholy still;
And idle children, wandering to and fro,
As Nature guided, took the tone of woe.
Arrived at home, how then they gazed around
On every place—where she—no more was found;—
The seat at table she was wont to fill;
The fire-side chair, still set, but vacant still;
The garden-walks, a labour all her own;
The latticed bower, with trailing shrubs o'er-grown;
The Sunday-pew she fill'd with all her race,—
Each place of hers, was now a sacred place.[18]
That, while it call'd up sorrows in the eyes,
Pierced the full heart and forced them still to rise.
Oh sacred sorrow! by whom souls are tried,
Sent not to punish mortals, but to guide;
If thou art mine, (and who shall proudly dare
To tell his Maker, he has had his share?)
Still let me feel for what thy pangs are sent,
And be my guide, and not my punishment!

Of *Leah Cousins* next the name appears,
With honours crown'd and blest with length of years,
Save that she lived to feel, in life's decay,
The pleasure die, the honours drop away;
A matron she, whom every village-wife
View'd as the help and guardian of her life;
Fathers and sons, indebted to her aid,
Respect to her and her profession paid;
Who in the house of plenty largely fed,
Yet took her station at the pauper's bed;
Nor from that duty could be bribed again,
While fear or danger urged her to remain:
In her experience all her friends relied.
Heaven was her help and nature was her guide.
Thus Leah lived; long-trusted, much caress'd,
Till a Town-Dame a youthful Farmer bless'd;
A gay vain bride, who would example give
To that poor village where she deign'd to live;
Some few months past, she sent, in hour of need,
For Doctor *Glibb*, who came with wond'rous speed:
Two days he waited, all his art applied,
To save the mother when her infant died:—
"'T was well I came," at last he deign'd to say;
"'T was wondrous well;"—and proudly rode away.

[18] [It has been told (*ante*, p. 29), that Mr. Crabbe, on returning to Aldborough, after the publication of "The Library," found that his mother had died while he was in London. "That affectionate parent, who would have lost all sense of sickness and suffering, had she witnessed his success, was no more: she had sunk under the dropsy, in his absence, with a fortitude of resignation closely resembling that of his own last hours. It happened that a friend and neighbour was slowly yielding at the same time to the same hopeless disorder, and every morning she used to desire her daughter to see if this sufferer's window was opened; saying, cheerfully, 'She must make haste, or I shall be at rest before her.'

My father has alluded to his feelings on this occasion in "The Parish Register:"—

> Arrived at home, how then he gazed around
> On every place—where she—no more was found;

And I find him recurring to the same theme in one of his manuscript pieces:—

> But oh! in after-years
> Were other deaths, that call'd for other tears:—
> No, that I dare not, that I cannot paint!
> The patient sufferer! the enduring saint!
> Holy and cheerful! but all words are faint!]

The news ran round ;—"How vast the Doctor's pow'r!"
"He saved the Lady in the trying hour;
"Saved her from death, when she was dead to hope,
"And her fond husband had resign'd her up:
"So all, like her, may evil fate defy,
"If Doctor Glibb, with saving hand, be nigh."
Fame (now his friend), fear, novelty, and whim,
And fashion, sent the varying sex to him:
From this, contention in the village rose;
And *these* the Dame espoused; the Doctor *those;*
The wealthier part to him and science went;
With luck and her the poor remain'd content.
The Matron sigh'd; for she was vex'd at heart,
With so much profit, so much fame, to part:
"So long successful in my art," she cried,
"And this proud man, so young and so untried!"
"Nay," said the Doctor, "dare you trust your wives,
"The joy, the pride, the solace of your lives,
"To one who acts and knows no reason why,
"But trusts, poor hag! to luck for an ally?—
"Who, on experience, can her claims advance,
"And own the powers of accident and chance?
"A whining dame, who prays in danger's view,
"(A proof she knows not what beside to do;)
"What 's her experience? In the time that 's gone,
"Blundering she wrought and still she blunders on:—
"And what is Nature? One who acts in aid
"Of gossips half asleep and half afraid:
"With such allies I scorn my fame to blend,
"Skill is my luck and courage is my friend;
"No slave to Nature, 'tis my chief delight
"To win my way and act in her despite:—
"Trust then my art, that, in itself complete,
"Needs no assistance and fears no defeat."
Warm'd by her well-spiced ale and aiding pipe,
The angry Matron grew for contest ripe.
"Can you," she said, "ungrateful and unjust,
"Before experience, ostentation trust!
"What is your hazard, foolish daughters, tell?
"If safe, you 're certain; if secure, you 're well:
"That I have luck must friend and foe confess,
"And what 's good judgment but a lucky guess?
"*He* boasts, but what he *can* do:—will you run
"From me, your friend! who, all *he* boasts, *have* done?
"By proud and learned words his powers are known;
"By healthy boys and handsome girls my own:
"Wives! fathers! children! by my help you live;
"Has this pale Doctor more than life to give?
"No stunted cripple hops the village round;
"Your hands are active and your heads are sound;
"My lads are all your fields and flocks require;
"My lasses all those sturdy lads admire.
"Can this proud leech, with all his boasted skill,
"Amend the soul or body, wit or will?
"Does he for courts the sons of farmers frame,
"Or make the daughter differ from the dame?
"Or, whom he brings into this world of woe,
"Prepares he them their part to undergo?
"If not, this stranger from your doors repel,
"And be content to *be* and to be *well.*"
She spake; but, ah! with words too strong and plain;
Her warmth offended, and her truth was vain:
The *many* left her, and the friendly *few,*
If never colder, yet they older grew;
Till, unemploy'd, she felt her spirits droop,
And took, insidious aid! th' inspiring cup;
Grew poor and peevish as her powers decay'd,
And propp'd the tottering frame with stronger aid,
Then died! I saw our careful swains convey,
From this our changeful world, the Matron's clay,
Who to this world, at least, with equal care,
Brought them its changes, good and ill to share.

Now to his grave was *Roger Cuff* convey'd,
And strong resentment's lingering spirit laid.
Shipwreck'd in youth, he home return'd, and found
His brethren three—and thrice they wish'd him drown'd.
"Is this a landsman's love? Be certain then,
"We part for ever!"—and they cried, "Amen!"
His words were truth's:—Some forty summers fled,
His brethren died; his kin supposed him dead:
Three nephews these, one sprightly niece, and one,
Less near in blood—they call'd him *surly John;*
He work'd in woods apart from all his kind,
Fierce were his looks and moody was his mind.
For home the sailor now began to sigh:—
"The dogs are dead, and I'll return and die;
"When all I have, my gains, in years of care,
"The younger Cuffs with kinder souls shall share—
"Yet hold! I 'm rich;—with one consent they 'll say,
"'You 're welcome, Uncle, as the flowers in May.'
"No; I 'll disguise me, be in tatters dress'd,
"And best befriend the lads who treat me best."
Now all his kindred,—neither rich nor poor,—
Kept the wolf want some distance from the door.
In piteous plight he knock'd at George's gate,
And begg'd for aid, as he described his state:—
But stern was George;—"Let them who had thee strong,
"Help thee to drag thy weaken'd frame along;
"To us a stranger, while your limbs would move,
"From us depart, and try a stranger's love:—
"Ha! dost thou murmur?"—for, in Roger's throat,
Was "Rascal!" rising with disdainful note.
To pious James he then his prayer address'd;—
"Good-lack," quoth James, "thy sorrows pierce my breast;
"And, had I wealth, as have my brethren twain,
"One board should feed us and one roof contain:
"But plead I will thy cause, and I will pray:
"And so farewell! Heaven help thee on thy way!"
"Scoundrel!" said Roger (but apart);—and told
His case to Peter;—Peter too was cold;—
"The rates are high; we have a-many poor;
"But I will think,"—he said, and shut the door.
Then the gay niece the seeming pauper press'd;—
"Turn, Nancy, turn, and view this form distress'd;
"Akin to thine is this declining frame,
"And this poor beggar claims an Uncle's name."
"Avaunt! begone!" the courteous maiden said,
"Thou vile impostor! Uncle Roger's dead:
"I hate thee, beast; thy look my spirit shocks;
"Oh! that I saw thee starving in the stocks!"
"My gentle niece!" he said—and sought the wood.—
"I hunger, fellow; prithee, give me food!"
"Give! am I rich? This hatchet take, and try
"Thy proper strength, nor give those limbs the lie;

"Work, feed thyself, to thine own powers appeal,
"Nor whine out woes, thine own right-hand can heal;
"And while that hand is thine and thine a leg,
"Scorn of the proud or of the base to beg."
"Come, *surly John*, thy wealthy kinsman view,"
Old Roger said;—"thy words are brave and true;
"Come, live with me: we 'll vex those scoundrel-boys,
"And that prim shrew shall, envying, hear our joys.—
"Tobacco's glorious fume all day we 'll share,
"With beef and brandy kill all kinds of care;
"We 'll beer and biscuit on our table heap,
"And rail at rascals, till we fall asleep."
Such was their life; but when the woodman died,
His grieving kin for Roger's smiles applied—
In vain; he shut, with stern rebuke, the door,
And dying, built a refuge for the poor,
With this restriction, That no *Cuff* should share
One meal, or shelter for one moment there.

My Record ends:—But hark! e'en now I hear
The bell of death, and know not whose to fear:[19]
Our farmers all, and all our hinds were well;
In no man's cottage danger seem'd to dwell:—
Yet death of man proclaim these heavy chimes,
For thrice they sound, with pausing space, three times.
"Go; of my Sexton seek, Whose days are sped?—
"What! he, himself!—and is old *Dibble* dead?"
His eightieth year he reach'd, still undecay'd,
And rectors five to one close vault convey'd:—
But he is gone; his care and skill I lose,
And gain a mournful subject for my Muse:
His masters lost, he 'd oft in turn deplore,
And kindly add,—"Heaven grant, I lose no more!"
Yet, while he spake, a sly and pleasant glance
Appear'd at variance with his complaisance:
For, as he told their fate and varying worth,
He archly look'd,—"I yet may bear thee forth."
"When first"—(he so began)—"my trade I plied,
"Good master *Addle* was the parish-guide;
"His clerk and sexton, I beheld with fear,
"His stride majestic, and his frown severe;
"A noble pillar of the church he stood,
"Adorn'd with college-gown and parish hood:
"Then as he paced the hallow'd aisles about,
"He fill'd the seven-fold surplice fairly out!
"But in his pulpit wearied down with prayer,
"He sat and seem'd as in his study's chair;
"For while the anthem swell'd, and when it ceased,
"The expecting people view'd their slumbering priest:
"Who, dozing, died.—Our Parson *Peele* was next;
"'I will not spare you,' was his favourite text;
"Nor did he spare, but raised them many a pound;
"E'en me he mulct for my poor rood of ground;
"Yet cared he nought, but with a gibing speech,
"'What should I do,' quoth he, 'but what I preach?'

"His piercing jokes (and he 'd a plenteous store)
"Were daily offer'd both to rich and poor;
"His scorn, his love, in playful words he spoke;
"His pity, praise, and promise, were a joke:
"But though so young and blest with spirits high,
"He died as grave as any judge could die:
"The strong attack subdued his lively powers,—
"His was the grave, and Doctor *Grandspear* ours.[20]
"Then were there golden times the village round;
"In his abundance all appear'd t' abound;
"Liberal and rich, a plenteous board he spread,
"E'en cool Dissenters at his table fed;
"Who wish'd and hoped,—and thought a man so kind
"A way to Heaven, though not their own, might find.
"To them, to all, he was polite and free,
"Kind to the poor, and, ah! most kind to me!
"'*Ralph*,' would he say, '*Ralph Dibble*, thou art old;
"'That doublet fit, 't will keep thee from the cold:
"'How does my sexton?—What! the times are hard;
"'Drive that stout pig, and pen him in thy yard.'
"But most, his rev'rence loved a mirthful jest:—
"'Thy coat is thin; why, man, thou 'rt *barely* dress'd;
"'It 's worn to th' thread: but I have nappy beer;
"'Clap that within, and see how they will wear!'
"Gay days were these; but they were quickly past:
"When first he came, we found he cou'dn't last:
"A whoreson cough (and at the fall of leaf)
"Upset him quite;—but what 's the gain of grief?
"Then came the *Author-Rector*:[21] his delight
"Was all in books; to read them or to write:
"Women and men he strove alike to shun,
"And hurried homeward when his tasks were done;
"Courteous enough, but careless what he said,
"For points of learning he reserved his head;
"And when addressing either poor or rich,
"He knew no better than his cassock which:
"He, like an osier, was of pliant kind,
"Erect by nature, but to bend inclined;
"Not like a creeper falling to the ground,
"Or meanly catching on the neighbours round:—
"Careless was he of surplice, hood, and band,[22]—
"And kindly took them as they came to hand,
"Nor, like the doctor, wore a world of hat,
"As if he sought for dignity in that:
"He talk'd, he gave, but not with cautious rules;
"Nor turn'd from gipsies, vagabonds, or fools;
"It was his nature, but they thought it whim,
"And so our beaux and beauties turn'd from him.
"Of questions, much he wrote, profound and dark,—
"How spake the serpent, and where stopp'd the ark;
"From what far land the queen of Sheba came;
"Who Salem's Priest, and what his father's name;
"He made the Song of Songs its mysteries yield,
"And Revelations, to the world, reveal'd.

[19] ["As if an angel spoke,
I feel the solemn sound. If heard *aright*,
It is the knell of my departed hours."—YOUNG.]

[20] [Dr. Grandspear is a rough outline of Dr. Bacon, the poet's predecessor at Muston.]

[21] [The Author-Rector is, at all points, the similitude of Mr. Crabbe himself, except in the subject of his lucubrations.]

[22] [See *ante*, p. 46.]

" He sleeps i' the aisle,—but not a stone records
" His name or fame, his actions or his words:
" And truth, your reverence, when I look around,
" And mark the tombs in our sepulchral ground
" (Though dare I not of one man's hope to doubt),
" I'd join the party who repose without.
" Next came a Youth from Cambridge, and in truth
" He was a sober and a comely youth;
" He blush'd in meekness as a modest man,
" And gain'd attention ere his task began;
" When preaching, seldom ventured on reproof,
" But touch'd his neighbours tenderly enough.
" Him, in his youth, a clamorous sect assail'd,
" Advised and censured, flatter'd,—and prevail'd.—
" Then did he much his sober hearers vex,
" Confound the simple, and the sad perplex;
" To a new style his reverence rashly took;
" Loud grew his voice, to threat'ning swell'd his look;
" Above, below, on either side he gazed,
" Amazing all, and most himself amazed:
" No more he read his preachments pure and plain,
" But launch'd outright, and rose and sank again:
" At times he smiled in scorn, at times he wept,
" And such sad coil with words of vengeance kept,
" That our blest sleepers started as they slept.
" 'Conviction comes like lightning,' he would cry;
" 'In vain you seek it, and in vain you fly;
" 'T is like the rushing of the mighty wind,
" 'Unseen its progress, but its power you find;
" 'It strikes the child ere yet its reason wakes;
" 'His reason fled, the ancient sire it shakes;
" 'The proud, learn'd man, and him who loves to know
" 'How and from whence these gusts of grace will blow,
" 'It shuns,—but sinners in their way impedes,
" 'And sots and harlots visits in their deeds:
" 'Of faith and penance it supplies the place;
" 'Assures the vilest that they live by grace,
" 'And, without running, makes them win the race.'
" Such was the doctrine our young prophet taught;
" And here conviction, there confusion wrought;
" When his thin cheek assumed a deadly hue,
" And all the rose to one small spot withdrew,
" They call'd it hectic; 't was a fiery flush,
" More fix'd and deeper than the maiden blush;
" His paler lips the pearly teeth disclosed,
" And lab'ring lungs the lenth'ning speech opposed.
" No more his span-girth shanks and quiv'ring thighs
" Upheld a body of the smaller size;
" But down he sank upon his dying bed,
" And gloomy crotchets fill'd his wandering head.—
" 'Spite of my faith, all-saving faith,' he cried,
" 'I fear of worldly works the wicked pride;
" 'Poor as I am, degraded, abject, blind,
" 'The good I've wrought still rankles in my mind;
" 'My alms-deeds all, and every deed I've done;
" 'My moral-rags defile me every one;
" 'It should not be:—what say'st thou! tell me, Ralph.'
" Quoth I, 'Your reverence, I believe, you're safe;
" 'Your faith's your prop, nor have you pass'd such time
" 'In life's good-works as swell them to a crime.
" 'If I of pardon for my sins were sure,
" 'About my goodness I would rest secure.'
" Such was his end; and mine approaches fast;
" I've seen my best of preachers,—and my last."—
He bow'd, and archly smiled at what he said,
Civil but sly:—" And is old Dibble dead?"
Yes; he is gone: and WE are going all;
Like flowers we wither, and like leaves we fall;[23]—
Here, with an infant, joyful sponsors come,
Then bear the new-made Christian to its home:
A few short years and we behold him stand
To ask a blessing, with his bride in hand;
A few, still seeming shorter, and we hear
His widow weeping at her husband's bier:—
Thus, as the months succeed, shall infants take
Their names; thus parents shall the child forsake;
Thus brides again and bridegrooms blithe shall kneel,
By love or law compell'd their vows to seal,
Ere I again, or one like me, explore
These simple Annals of the VILLAGE POOR.

[23] ["Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground," &c.
POPE'S *Homer*.]

[24] ["On the whole, the Parish Register deserves very superior commendation, as well for the flow of verse and for the language, which is manly and powerful, equally remote from vicious ornament and the still more disgusting cant of idiot simplicity, as for the sterling poetry, and original powers of thought, of which it contains unquestionable proofs. One remark we add with pleasure, as prophetic of a still higher degree of excellence which the author may hereafter attain: his later productions are, in every respect, better and more perfect than those by which he first became known as a poet."—*Monthly Review*, 1807.

"The characteristic of Crabbe is force, and truth of description, joined for the most part to great selection and condensation of expression; that kind of strength and originality which we meet with in Cowper, and that sort of diction and versification which we admire in Goldsmith. If he can be said to have imitated the manner of any author, it is Goldsmith; and yet his general train of thinking, and his views of society, are so extremely opposite, that, when 'The Village' was first published, it was commonly considered as an antidote, or answer, to the more captivating representations of the 'Deserted Village.' Compared with this celebrated author, he will be found to have more vigour and less delicacy; and, while he must be admitted to be inferior in the fine finish and uniform beauty of his composition, we cannot help considering him as superior both in the variety and the truth of his pictures. Instead of that uniform tint of pensive tenderness which overspreads the whole poetry of Goldsmith, we find in Mr. Crabbe many gleams of gaiety and humour. Though his habitual views of life are more gloomy than those of his rival, his poetical temperament seems more cheerful; and when the occasions of sorrow and rebuke are gone by, he can collect himself for sarcastic pleasantries, or unbend in innocent playfulness.... We part from him with regret; but we hope to meet him again. If his muse, to be sure, is prolific only once in twenty-two years, we can scarcely expect to live long enough to pass our judgment on his progeny; but we trust that a larger portion of public favour than has hitherto been dealt to him, will encourage him to greater efforts; and that he will soon appear again among the worthy supporters of the old poetical establishment."—JEFFREY, 1807.

"There be, who say, in these enlighten'd days,
That splendid lies are all the Poet's praise;
That strain'd invention, ever on the wing,
Alone impels the modern bard to sing:
'Tis true, that all who rhyme—nay, all who write,
Shrink from that fatal word to genius—trite;
Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires,
And decorate the verse herself inspires:
This fact, in Virtue's name, let CRABBE attest;
Though Nature's sternest painter, yet the best."
BYRON, 1808.]

THE BIRTH OF FLATTERY.[1]

THE BIRTH OF FLATTERY.

Omnia habeo, nec quicquam habeo;
Quidquid dicunt, laudo; id rursum si negant, laudo id quoque:
Negat quis, nego; ait, aio:
Postremò imperavi egomet mihi
Omnia assentari.

TERENT. *in Eunuch.*[2]

'T is an old maxim in the schools,
That flattery is the food of fools;
Yet now and then your men of wit
Will condescend to taste a bit.—SWIFT.

The Subject—Poverty and Cunning described—When united, a jarring Couple—Mutual Reproof—the Wife consoled by a Dream—Birth of a Daughter—Description and Prediction of Envy—How to be rendered ineffectual, explained in a Vision—Simulation foretells the future Success and Triumphs of Flattery—Her Power over various Characters and Different Minds; over certain Classes of Men; over Envy himself—Her successful Art of softening the Evils of Life; of changing Characters; of meliorating Prospects, and affixing Value to Possessions, Pictures, &c.—Conclusion.

MUSE of my Spenser, who so well could sing
The passions all, their bearings and their ties;
Who could in view those shadowy beings bring,
And with bold hand remove each dark disguise,
Wherein love, hatred, scorn, or anger lies:
Guide him to Fairy-land, who now intends
That way his flight; assist him as he flies,
To mark those passions, Virtue's foes and friends,
By whom when led she droops, when leading she ascends.

Yes! they appear, I see the fairy train!
And who that modest nymph of meek address?
Not Vanity, though loved by all the vain;
Not Hope, though promising to all success;
Not Mirth, nor Joy, though foe to all distress;
Thee, sprightly syren, from this train I choose,
Thy birth relate, thy soothing arts confess;
'T is not in thy mild nature to refuse,
When poets ask thine aid, so oft their meed and muse.[3]

In Fairy-land, on wide and cheerless plain,
Dwelt, in the house of *Care*, a sturdy swain;
A hireling he, who, when he till'd the soil,
Look'd to the pittance that repaid his toil,
And to a master left the mingled joy
And anxious care that follow'd his employ.
Sullen and patient he at once appear'd,
As one who murmur'd, yet as one who fear'd;
Th' attire was coarse that clothed his sinewy frame,
Rude his address, and *Poverty* his name.

In that same plain a nymph, of curious taste,
A cottage (plann'd, with all her skill) had placed;
Strange the materials, and for what design'd
The various parts, no simple man might find;
What seem'd the door, each entering guest withstood,
What seem'd a window was but painted wood;
But by a secret spring the wall would move,
And daylight drop through glassy door above:
'T was all her pride, new traps for praise to lay,
And all her wisdom was to hide her way;
In small attempts incessant were her pains,
And *Cunning* was her name among the swains.[4]

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1 [See *anté*, p. 100.]

2 ["I 've every thing, though nothing; nought possess,
Yet nought I ever want.—
Whate'er they say, I praise it; if again
They contradict, I praise that too: does any
Deny? I too deny: Affirm? I too.
And, in a word, I 've brought myself
To say, unsay, swear, and forswear, at pleasure."
COLMAN.]

3 [Original MS.:—

Muse of my Spenser, who so well could sing
The Passions, and the sources whence they spring;
Who taught the birth, the bearings, and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies,
Of these the Foes of Virtue and the Friends,
With whom she rises and with whom descends—
A Syren's birth, a Syren's power I trace,
Aid me, oh! Herald of the Fairy-race;
Say whence she sprang, to what strange fortune born,
And why we love and hate, desire and scorn.]

4 [Original MS.:—

From whom she sprang, not one around her knew,
Nor why she came, nor what she had in view;
Labour she loved not, had no wealth in store,
Pursued no calling, yet was never poor;
A thousand gifts her various arts repaid,
And bounteous fairies blest the thriving maid;
For she had secret means of easy gains,
And Cunning was her name among the swains.]

Now, whether fate decreed this pair should wed,
And blindly drove them to the marriage bed;
Or whether love in some soft hour inclined
The damsel's heart, and won her to be kind,
Is yet unsung: they were an ill-match'd pair,
But both disposed to wed—and wed they were.

Yet, though united in their fortune, still
Their ways were diverse; varying was their will;
Nor long the maid had bless'd the simple man,
Before dissensions rose, and she began:—

"Wretch that I am! since to thy fortune bound,
"What plan, what project, with success is crown'd?
"I, who a thousand secret arts possess,
"Who every rank approach with right address;
"Who 've loosed a guinea from a miser's chest,
"And worm'd his secret from a traitor's breast;
"Thence gifts and gains collecting, great and small,
"Have brought to thee, and thou consum'st them all;
"For want like thine—a bog without a base—
"Ingulfs all gains I gather for the place;
"Feeding, unfill'd; destroying, undestroy'd;
"It craves for ever, and is ever void:—
"Wretch that I am! what misery have I found,
"Since my sure craft was to thy calling bound!"

"Oh! vaunt of worthless art," the swain replied,
Scowling contempt, "how pitiful this pride!
"What are these specious gifts, these paltry gains,
"But base rewards for ignominious pains?
"With all thy tricking, still for bread we strive,
"Thine is, proud wretch! the care that cannot thrive;
"By all thy boasted skill and baffled hooks,
"Thou gain'st no more than students by their books.
"No more than I for my poor deeds am paid,
"Whom none can blame, will help, or dare upbraid.
"Call this our need, a bog that all devours,—
"Then what thy petty arts, but summer-flowers,
"Gaudy and mean, and serving to betray
"The place they make unprofitably gay?
"Who know it not, some useless beauties see,—
"But ah! to prove it was reserved for me."

Unhappy state! that, in decay of love,
Permits harsh truth his errors to disprove;
While he remains, to wrangle and to jar,
Is friendly tournament, not fatal war;
Love in his play will borrow arms of hate,
Anger and rage, upbraiding and debate;
And by his power the desperate weapons thrown,
Become as safe and pleasant as his own;
But left by him, their natures they assume,
And fatal, in their poisoning force, become.

Time fled, and now the swain compell'd to see
New cause for fear—"Is this thy thrift?" quoth he.
To whom the wife with cheerful voice replied:—
"Thou moody man, lay all thy fears aside;
"I've seen a vision—they, from whom I came,
"A daughter promise, promise wealth and fame;
"Born with my features, with my arts, yet she
"Shall patient, pliant, persevering be,
"And in thy better ways resemble thee.
"The fairies round shall at her birth attend,
"The friend of all in all shall find a friend,
"And save that one sad star that hour must gleam
"On our fair child, how glorious were my dream!"

This heard the husband, and, in surly smile,
Aim'd at contempt, but yet he hoped the while:
For as, when sinking, wretched men are found
To catch at rushes rather than be drown'd;
So on a dream our peasant placed his hope,
And found that rush as valid as a rope.

Swift fled the days, for now in hope they fled,
When a fair daughter bless'd the nuptial bed;
Her infant-face the mother's pains beguiled,
She look'd so pleasing and so softly smiled;
Those smiles, those looks, with sweet sensations moved
The gazer's soul, and as he look'd he loved.

And now the fairies came with gifts, to grace
So mild a nature, and so fair a face.
They gave, with beauty, that bewitching art,
That holds in easy chains the human heart;
They gave her skill to win the stubborn mind,
To make the suffering to their sorrows blind,
To bring on pensive looks the pleasing smile,
And *Care*'s stern brow of every frown beguile.
These magic favours graced the infant-maid,
Whose more enlivening smile the charming gifts repaid.
Now Fortune changed, who, were she constant long,
Would leave us few adventures for our song.
A wicked elfin roved this land around,
Whose joys proceeded from the griefs he found;
Envy his name:—his fascinating eye
From the light bosom drew the sudden sigh;
Unsocial he, but with malignant mind,
He dwelt with man, that he might curse mankind;
Like the first foe, he sought th' abode of Joy,
Grieved to behold, but eager to destroy;
Round blooming beauty, like the wasp, he flew,
Soil'd the fresh sweet, and changed the rosy hue;
The wise, the good, with anxious heart he saw,
And here a failing found, and there a flaw;
Discord in families 't was his to move,
Distrust in friendship, jealousy in love;
He told the poor, what joys the great possess'd;
The great, what calm content the cottage bless'd:
To part the learned and the rich he tried,
Till their slow friendship perish'd in their pride.
Such was the fiend, and so secure of prey,
That only Misery pass'd unstung away.

Soon as he heard the fairy-babe was born,
Scornful he smiled, but felt no more than scorn:
For why, when Fortune placed her state so low,
In useless spite his lofty malice show?
Why, in a mischief of the meaner kind,
Exhaust the vigour of a rancorous mind;
But, soon as Fame the fairy-gifts proclaim'd,
Quick-rising wrath his ready soul inflamed
To swear, by vows that e'en the wicked tie,
The nymph should weep her varied destiny;
That every gift, that now appear'd to shine
In her fair face, and make her smiles divine,

Should all the poison of his magic prove,
And they should scorn her, whom she sought for love.

His spell prepared, in form an ancient dame,
A fiend in spirit, to the cot he came;
There gain'd admittance, and the infant press'd
(Muttering his wicked magic) to his breast;
And thus he said:—"Of all the powers who wait
"On Jove's decrees, and do the work of fate,
"Was I, alone, despised or worthless, found,
"Weak to protect, or impotent to wound?
"See then thy foe, regret the friendship lost,
"And learn my skill, but learn it at your cost.
"Know, then, O child! devote to fates severe,
"The good shall hate thy name, the wise shall fear;
"Wit shall deride, and no protecting friend
"Thy shame shall cover, or thy name defend.
"Thy gentle sex, who, more than ours, should spare
"A humble foe, will greater scorn declare;
"The base alone thy advocates shall be,
"Or boast alliance with a wretch like thee."

He spake, and vanish'd, other prey to find,
And waste in slow disease the conquer'd mind.

Awed by the elfin's threats, and fill'd with dread
The parents wept, and sought their infant's bed:
Despair alone the father's soul possess'd;
But hope rose gently in the mother's breast;
For well she knew that neither grief nor joy
Pain'd without hope, or pleased without alloy;
And while these hopes and fears her heart divide,
A cheerful vision bade the fears subside.

She saw descending to the world below
An ancient form, with solemn pace and slow.
"Daughter, no more be sad" (the phantom cried),
"Success is seldom to the wise denied;
"In idle wishes fools supinely stay,
"Be there a will, and wisdom finds a way:
"Why art thou grieved? Be rather glad, that he
"Who hates the happy, aims his darts at thee,
"But aims in vain; thy favour'd daughter lies
"Serenely blest, and shall to joy arise.
"For, grant that curses on her name shall wait,
"(So Envy wills, and such the voice of Fate,)
"Yet if that name be prudently suppress'd,
"She shall be courted, favour'd, and caress'd.
"For what are names? and where agree mankind,
"In those to persons or to acts assign'd?
"Brave, learn'd, or wise, if some their favourites call,
"Have they the titles or the praise from all?
"Not so, but others will the brave disdain
"As rash, and deem the sons of wisdom vain;
"The self-same mind shall scorn or kindness move,
"And the same deed attract contempt and love.
"So all the powers who move the human soul,
"With all the passions who the will control,
"Have various names—One giv'n by Truth Divine,
"(As *Simulation* thus was fixed for mine,)
"The rest by man, who now, as wisdom's prize
"My secret counsels, now as art despise;
"One hour, as just, those counsels they embrace,
"And spurn, the next, as pitiful and base.

"Thee, too, my child, those fools as Cunning fly,
"Who on thy counsel and thy craft rely;
"That worthy craft in others they condemn,
"But 't is their prudence, while conducting them.
"Be FLATTERY, then, thy happy infant's name,
"Let *Honour* scorn her and let *Wit* defame;
"Let all be true that Envy dooms, yet all,
"Not on herself, but on her name, shall fall;
"While she thy fortune and her own shall raise,
"And decent *Truth* be call'd, and loved as, modest *Praise*.
"O happy child! the glorious day shall shine,
"When every ear shall to thy speech incline,
"Thy words alluring and thy voice divine:
"The sullen pedant and the sprightly wit,
"To hear thy soothing eloquence shall sit;
"And both, abjuring Flattery, will agree
"That Truth inspires, and they must honour thee.
"*Envy* himself shall to thy accents bend,
"Force a faint smile, and sullenly attend,
"When thou shalt call him *Virtue's jealous friend*,
"Whose bosom glows with generous rage to find
"How fools and knaves are flatter'd by mankind.
"The sage retired, who spends alone his days,
"And flies th' obstreperous voice of public praise;
"The vain, the vulgar cry,—shall gladly meet,
"And bid thee welcome to his still retreat;
"Much will he wonder, how thou cam'st to find
"A man to glory dead, to peace consign'd.
"O Fame! he 'll cry (for he will call thee Fame),
"From thee I fly, from thee conceal my name;
"But thou shalt say, Though Genius takes his flight,
"He leaves behind a glorious train of light,
"And hides in vain:—yet prudent he that flies
"The flatterer's art, and for himself is wise.
"Yes, happy child! I mark th' approaching day,
"When warring natures will confess thy sway;
"When thou shalt Saturn's golden reign restore,
"And vice and folly shall be known no more.
"*Pride* shall not then in human-kind have place,
"Changed by thy skill, to *Dignity* and *Grace*;
"While *Shame*, who now betrays the inward sense
"Of secret ill, shall be thy *Diffidence*;
"*Avarice* shall thenceforth prudent *Forecast* be,
"And bloody *Vengeance*, *Magnanimity*;
"The lavish tongue shall honest truths impart,
"The lavish hand shall show the generous heart,
"And *Indiscretion* be, contempt of art;
"*Folly* and *Vice* shall then, no longer known,
"Be, this as *Virtue*, that as *Wisdom*, shown.
"Then shall the Robber, as the Hero, rise
"To seize the good that churlish law denies;
"Throughout the world shall rove the generous band,
"And deal the gifts of Heaven from hand to hand.
"In thy blest days no tyrant shall be seen,
"Thy gracious king shall rule contented men;
"In thy blest days shall not a rebel be,
"But patriots all and well-approved of thee.
"Such powers are thine, that man by thee shall wrest
"The gainful secret from the cautious breast;
"Nor then, with all his care, the good retain,
"But yield to thee the secret and the gain.
"In vain shall much experience guard the heart
"Against the charm of thy prevailing art;

" Admitted once, so soothing is thy strain,
" It comes the sweeter, when it comes again ;
" And when confess'd as thine, what mind so strong
" Forbears the pleasure it indulged so long ?
" Softener of every ill ! of all our woes
" The balmy solace ! friend of fiercest foes !
" Begin thy reign, and like the morning rise !
" Bring joy, bring beauty, to our eager eyes ;
" Break on the drowsy world like opening day,
" While grace and gladness join thy flow'ry way ;
" While every voice is praise, while every heart is gay.
" From thee all prospects shall new beauties take,
" 'T is thine to seek them and 't is thine to make ;
" On the cold fen I see thee turn thine eyes,
" Its mists recede, its chilling vapour flies ;
" Th' enraptured lord th' improving ground surveys,
" And for his Eden asks the traveller's praise,
" Which yet, unview'd of thee, a bog had been,
" Where spungy rushes hide the plashy green.
" I see thee breathing on the barren moor,
" That seems to bloom although so bleak before ;
" There, if beneath the gorse the primrose spring,
" Or the pied daisy smile below the ling,
" They shall new charms, at thy command disclose,
" And none shall miss the myrtle or the rose.
" The wiry moss, that whitens all the hill,
" Shall live a beauty by thy matchless skill ;
" Gale [5] from the bog shall yield Arabian balm,
" And the grey willow wave a golden palm.
" I see thee smiling in the pictured room,
" Now breathing beauty, now reviving bloom ;
" There, each immortal name 't is thine to give,
" To graceless forms, and bid the lumber live.
" Should'st thou coarse boors or gloomy martyrs see,
" These shall thy Guidos, those thy Teniers be ;
" There shalt thou Raphael's saints and angels trace,
" There make for Rubens and for Reynolds place,
" And all the pride of art shall find, in her disgrace.
" Delight of either sex ! thy reign commence ;
" With balmy sweetness soothe the weary sense,
" And to the sickening soul thy cheering aid dispense.
" Queen of the mind ! thy golden age begin ;
" In mortal bosoms varnish shame and sin ;
" Let all be fair without, let all be calm within."

The vision fled, the happy mother rose,
Kiss'd the fair infant, smiled at all her foes,
And FLATTERY made her name :—her reign began :
Her own dear sex she ruled, then vanquish'd man :
A smiling friend, to every class she spoke,
Assumed their manners, and their habits took ;
Her, for her humble mien, the modest loved ;
Her cheerful looks the light and gay approved ;
The just beheld her, firm ; the valiant, brave ;
Her mirth the free, her silence pleased the grave ;
Zeal heard her voice, and, as he preach'd aloud,
Well pleased he caught her whispers from the crowd
(Those whispers, soothing-sweet to every ear,
Which some refuse to pay, but none to hear) :
Shame fled her presence ; at her gentle strain,
Care softly smiled, and Guilt forgot its pain ;
The wretched thought, the happy found, her true,
The learn'd confess'd that she their merits knew,
The rich—could they a constant friend condemn ?
The poor believed—for who should flatter them ?

Thus on her name though all disgrace attend,
In every creature she beholds a friend.[6]

[5] ["Myrica gale," a shrub growing in boggy and feiny grounds.]

[6] ["With many nervous lines and ingenious allusions, this poem has something of the languor which seems inseparable from an allegory which exceeds the length of an epigram."—JEFFERY.]

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE SUBJECT—

Quid juvat errores, mersâ jam puppe, fateri?
Quid lacrymæ delicta juvant commissa secutæ?
CLAUDIAN. in Eutropium, lib. ii. lin. 7.

What avails it, when shipwreck'd, that error appears?
Are the crimes we commit wash'd away by our tears?[1]

WHEN all the fiercer passions cease
(The glory and disgrace of youth);
When the deluded soul, in peace,
Can listen to the voice of truth;
When we are taught in whom to trust,
And how to spare, to spend, to give,
(Our prudence kind, our pity just,)
'T is then we rightly learn to live.

Its weakness when the body feels,
Nor danger in contempt defies;
To reason when desire appeals,
When, on experience, hope relies;
When every passing hour we prize,
Nor rashly on our follies spend;
But use it, as it quickly flies,
With sober aim to serious end;
When prudence bounds our utmost views,
And bids us wrath and wrong forgive;
When we can calmly gain or lose,—
'T is then we rightly learn to live.

Yet thus, when we our way discern,
And can upon our care depend,
To travel safely, when we learn,
Behold! we 're near our journey's end.
We 've trod the maze of error round,
Long wand'ring in the winding glade;
And, now the torch of truth is found,
It only shows us where we stray'd:
Light for ourselves, what is it worth,
When we no more our way can choose?
For others, when we hold it forth,
They, in their pride, the boon refuse.

By long experience taught, we now
Can rightly judge of friends and foes,
Can all the worth of these allow,
And all their faults discern in those;
Relentless hatred, erring love,
We can for sacred truth forego;
We can the warmest friend reprove,
And bear to praise the fiercest foe:
To what effect? Our friends are gone
Beyond reproof, regard, or care;
And of our foes remains there one,
The mild relenting thoughts to share?

Now 't is our boast that we can quell
The wildest passions in their rage;
Can their destructive force repel,
And their impetuous wrath assuage:
Ah! Virtue, dost thou arm, when now
This bold rebellious race are fled;
When all these tyrants rest, and thou
Art warring with the mighty dead?
Revenge, ambition, scorn, and pride,
And strong desire, and fierce disdain,
The giant-brood by thee defied,
Lo! Time's resistless strokes have slain.

Yet Time, who could that race subdue,
(O'erpowering strength, appeasing rage,)
Leaves yet a persevering crew,
To try the failing powers of age.
Vex'd by the constant call of these,
Virtue awhile for conquest tries;
But weary grown and fond of ease,
She makes with them a compromise:
Av'rice himself she gives to rest,
But rules him with her strict commands;
Bids Pity touch his torpid breast,
And Justice hold his eager hands.

Yet is there nothing men can do,
When chilling Age comes creeping on?
Cannot we yet some good pursue?
Are talents buried? genius gone?

[1] [See Preface, *antè*, p. 100.]

If passions slumber in the breast,
If follies from the heart be fled;
Of laurels let us go in quest,
And place them on the poet's head.

Yes, we 'll redeem the wasted time,
And to neglected studies flee;
We 'll build again the lofty rhyme,
Or live, Philosophy, with thee:
For reasoning clear, for flight sublime,
Eternal fame reward shall be;
And to what glorious heights we 'll climb,
The admiring crowd shall envying see.

Begin the song! begin the theme!—
Alas! and is Invention dead?
Dream we no more the golden dream?
Is Mem'ry with her treasures fled?
Yes, 't is too late,—now Reason guides
The mind, sole judge in all debate;
And thus the important point decides,
For laurels, 't is, alas! too late.
What is possess'd we may retain,
But for new conquests strive in vain.

Beware then, Age, that what was won,
If life's past labours, studies, views,
Be lost not, now the labour 's done,
When all thy part is,—not to lose:
When thou canst toil or gain no more,
Destroy not what was gain'd before.

For, all that 's gain'd of all that 's good,
When time shall his weak frame destroy
(Their use then rightly understood),
Shall man, in happier state, enjoy.
Oh! argument for truth divine,
For study's cares, for virtue's strife;
To know the enjoyment will be thine,
In that renew'd, that endless life!

SIR EUSTACE GREY.[1]

Scene.—A MADHOUSE.

Persons—VISITOR, PHYSICIAN, AND PATIENT.

"Veris miscens falsa."
SENECA, *in Herc. furente.*[2]

VISITOR.

I'LL know no more;—the heart is torn
By views of woe we cannot heal;
Long shall I see these things forlorn,
And oft again their griefs shall feel,
As each upon the mind shall steal;
That wan projector's mystic style,
That lumpish idiot leering by,
That peevish idler's ceaseless wile,
And that poor maiden's half-form'd smile,
While struggling for the full-drawn sigh!—
I'll know no more.

PHYSICIAN.

Yes, turn again;
Then speed to happier scenes thy way,
When thou hast view'd, what yet remain,
The ruins of Sir Eustace Grey,
The sport of madness, misery's prey:
But he will no historian need,
His cares, his crimes, will he display,
And show (as one from frenzy freed)
The proud lost mind, the rash-done deed.

That cell to him is Greyling Hall:—
Approach; he'll bid thee welcome there;
Will sometimes for his servant call,
And sometimes point the vacant chair;
He can, with free and easy air,
Appear attentive and polite;
Can veil his woes in manners fair,
And pity with respect excite.

PATIENT.

Who comes?—Approach!—'t is kindly done:—
My learn'd physician, and a friend,
Their pleasures quit, to visit one
Who cannot to their ease attend,[3]
Nor joys bestow, nor comforts lend,
As when I lived so blest, so well,
And dreamt not I must soon contend
With those malignant powers of hell.

PHYSICIAN.

"Less warmth, Sir Eustace, or we go."

PATIENT.

See! I am calm as infant-love,
A very child, but one of woe,
Whom you should pity, not reprove:—
But men at ease, who never strove
With passions wild, will calmly show
How soon we may their ills remove,
And masters of their madness grow.

Some twenty years, I think, are gone,—
(Time flies I know not how, away,)
The sun upon no happier shone,
Nor prouder man, than Eustace Grey.
Ask where you would, and all would say,
The man admired and praised of all,
By rich and poor, by grave and gay,
Was the young lord of Greyling Hall.

Yes! I had youth and rosy health;
Was nobly form'd, as man might be;
For sickness, then, of all my wealth,
I never gave a single fee:
The ladies fair, the maidens free,
Were all accustom'd then to say,
Who would a handsome figure see
Should look upon Sir Eustace Grey.

[1] [This poem was composed at Muston, in the winter of 1804-5, during a great snow-storm (see Life, *ante*, p. 51). For the Author's account of his design in the piece, see Preface, *ante*, p. 100.]

[2] ["With truth mingling the false."—HEYWOOD, 1581.]

[3] [Original MS.:—

Who comes?—Approach!—'t is kindly done—
The worthy doctor, and a friend.
'T is more than kind to visit one
Who has not now to spare or spend,
As when I lived so blest, so well!]

He had a frank and pleasant look,
A cheerful eye and accent bland;
His very speech and manner spoke
The generous heart, the open hand;
About him all was gay or grand,
He had the praise of great and small;
He bought, improved, projected, plann'd,
And reign'd a prince at Greyling Hall.

My lady!—she was all we love;
All praise (to speak her worth) is faint;
Her manners show'd the yielding dove,
Her morals, the seraphic saint:
She never breath'd nor look'd complaint;
No equal upon earth had she:—
Now, what is this fair thing I paint?
Alas! as all that live shall be.[4]

There was, beside, a gallant youth,
And him my bosom's friend I had;—
Oh! I was rich in very truth,
It made me proud—it made me mad!—
Yes, I was lost—but there was cause!—
Where stood my tale?—I cannot find—
But I had all mankind's applause,
And all the smiles of womankind.

There were two cherub-things beside,
A gracious girl, a glorious boy;
Yet more to swell my full-blown pride,
To varnish higher my fading joy,
Pleasures were ours without alloy,
Nay, Paradise,—till my frail Eve
Our bliss was tempted to destroy—
Deceived and fated to deceive.

But I deserved;—for all that time,
When I was loved, admired, caress'd,
There was within, each secret crime,
Unfelt, uncancell'd, unconfess'd:
I never then my God address'd,
In grateful praise or humble prayer;
And if His Word was not my jest—
(Dread thought!) it never was my care.

I doubted:—fool I was to doubt!
If that all-piercing eye could see,—
If He who looks all worlds throughout,
Would so minute and careful be
As to perceive and punish me:—
With man I would be great and high,
But with my God so lost, that He,
In his large view, should pass me by.[5]

Thus blest with children, friend, and wife,
Blest far beyond the vulgar lot;
Of all that gladdens human life,
Where was the good that I had not?

But my vile heart had sinful spot,
And Heaven beheld its deep'ning stain;
Eternal justice I forgot,
And mercy sought not to obtain.

Come near,—I 'll softly speak the rest!—
Alas! 't is known to all the crowd,
Her guilty love was all confess'd;
And his, who so much truth avow'd,
My faithless friend's.—In pleasure proud
I sat, when these cursed tidings came;
Their guilt, their flight was told aloud,
And Envy smiled to hear my shame!

I call'd on Vengeance; at the word
She came:—Can I the deed forget?
I held the sword—the accursed sword
The blood of his false heart made wet;
And that fair victim paid her debt,
She pined, she died, she loath'd to live;—
I saw her dying—see her yet:
Fair fallen thing! my rage forgive!

Those cherubs still, my life to bless,
Were left; could I my fears remove,
Sad fears that check'd each fond caress,
And poison'd all parental love?
Yet that with jealous feelings strove,
And would at last have won my will,
Had I not, wretch! been doom'd to prove
Th' extremes of mortal good and ill.

In youth! health! joy! in beauty's pride!
They droop'd—as flowers when blighted bow;
The dire infection came:—they died,
And I was cursed—as I am now;—
Nay, frown not, angry friend,—allow
That I was deeply, sorely tried;
Hear then, and you must wonder how
I could such storms and strifes abide.[6]

Storms!—not that clouds embattled make,
When they afflict this earthly globe;
But such as with their terrors shake
Man's breast, and to the bottom probe;
They make the hypocrite disrobe,
They try us all, if false or true;
For this one Devil had power on Job;
And I was long the slave of two.

PHYSICIAN.

Peace, peace, my friend; these subjects fly;
Collect thy thoughts—go calmly on.—

[4] [Original MS.:—
Worms, doctor, worms, and so are we.]

[5] Here follows, in the original MS.:—
Madman! shall He who made this all,
The parts that form the whole reject?
Is aught with him so great or small,
He cannot punish or protect?
Man's folly may his crimes neglect,
And hope the eye of God to shun;
But there 's of all the account correct—
Not one omitted—no, not one.]

[6] [MS.:—Nay, frown not—chide not—but allow
Pity to one so sorely tried:
But I am calm—to fate I bow,
And all the storms of life abide.]

PATIENT.

And shall I then the fact deny?
I was,—thou know'st,—I was begone,
Like him who fill'd the eastern throne,
To whom the Watcher cried aloud;[7]
That royal wretch of Babylon,
Who was so guilty and so proud.

Like him, with haughty, stubborn mind,
I, in my state, my comforts sought;
Delight and praise I hoped to find,
In what I builded, planted! bought!
Oh! arrogance! by misery taught—
Soon came a voice! I felt it come;
"Full be his cup, with evil fraught,
"Demons his guides, and death his doom!"

Then was I cast from out my state;
Two fiends of darkness led my way;
They waked me early, watch'd me late,
My dread by night, my plague by day!
Oh! I was made their sport, their play,
Through many a stormy troubled year;
And how they used their passive prey
Is sad to tell:—but you shall hear.

And first before they sent me forth,
Through this unpitying world to run,
They robb'd Sir Eustace of his worth,
Lands, manors, lordships, every one;
So was that gracious man undone,
Was spurn'd as vile, was scorn'd as poor,
Whom every former friend would shun,
And menials drove from every door.

Then those ill-favour'd Ones,[8] whom none
But my unhappy eyes could view,
Led me, with wild emotion, on,
And, with resistless terror, drew.
Through lands we fled, o'er seas we flew,
And halted on a boundless plain;
Where nothing fed, nor breathed, nor grew,
But silence ruled the still domain.

Upon that boundless plain, below,
The setting sun's last rays were shed,
And gave a mild and sober glow,
Where all were still, asleep, or dead;
Vast ruins in the midst were spread,
Pillars and pediments sublime,
Where the grey moss had form'd a bed,
And clothed the crumbling spoils of time.

There was I fix'd, I know not how,
Condemn'd for untold years to stay:
Yet years were not;—one dreadful *Now*
Endured no change of night or day;
The same mild evening's sleeping ray
Shone softly solemn and serene,
And all that time I gazed away,
The setting sun's sad rays were seen.[9]

At length a moment's sleep stole on,—
Again came my commission'd foes;
Again through sea and land we 're gone,
No peace, no respite, no repose:
Above the dark broad sea we rose,
We ran through bleak and frozen land;
I had no strength their strength t' oppose,
An infant in a giant's hand.

They placed me where those streamers play,
Those nimble beams of brilliant light;
It would the stoutest heart dismay,
To see, to feel, that dreadful sight:
So swift, so pure, so cold, so bright,
They pierced my frame with icy wound;
And all that half-year's polar night,
Those dancing streamers wrapp'd me round.

Slowly that darkness pass'd away,
When down upon the earth I fell,—
Some hurried sleep was mine by day;
But, soon as toll'd the evening bell,
They forced me on, where ever dwell
Far-distant men in cities fair,
Cities of whom no travellers tell,
Nor feet but mine were wanderers there.

Their watchmen stare, and stand aghast,
As on we hurry through the dark;
The watch-light blinks as we go past,
The watch-dog shrinks and fears to bark;
The watch-tower's bell sounds shrill; and, hark!
The free wind blows—we 've left the town—
A wide sepulchral ground I mark,
And on a tombstone place me down.

What monuments of mighty dead!
What tombs of various kind are found!
And stones erect their shadows shed
On humble graves, with wickers bound,
Some risen fresh, above the ground,
Some level with the native clay:
What sleeping millions wait the sound,
"Arise, ye dead, and come away!"

Alas! they stay not for that call;
Spare me this woe! ye demons, spare!—
They come! the shrouded shadows all,—
'Tis more than mortal brain can bear;
Rustling they rise, they sternly glare
At man upheld by vital breath;
Who, led by wicked fiends, should dare
To join the shadowy troops of death!

[7] "And the king (Nebuchadnezzar) saw a watcher and an holy one come down from heaven," &c.—*Dan.* iv. 23.

[8] See Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

[9] ["There is great force, both of language and conception, in the wild narrative Sir Eustace gives of his frenzy; though we are not sure whether there is not something too elaborate, and too much worked-up in the picture."—JEFFREY.

"In the struggle of the passions, we delight to trace the workings of the soul; we love to mark the swell of every vein, and the throb of every pulse; every stroke that searches a new source of pity and terror we pursue with a busy and inquisitive sympathy. It is from this cause that Mr. Crabbe's delineations of the passions are so just—so touching of the gentle, and of the awful so tremendous. Remorse and madness have been rarely portrayed by a more powerful hand. For feeling, imagery, and agitation of thoughts, the lines in which Sir Eustace Grey tells the story of his insanity are second to few modern productions. The contrast between the state of the madness, and the evening scene on which he was

Yes, I have felt all man can feel,
Till he shall pay his nature's debt;
Ills that no hope has strength to heal,
No mind the comfort to forget:
Whatever cares the heart can fret,
The spirits wear, the temper gall,
Woe, want, dread, anguish, all beset
My sinful soul!—together all![10]

Those fiends upon a shaking fen
Fix'd me, in dark tempestuous night;
There never trod the foot of men,
There flock'd the fowl in wint'ry flight;
There danced the moor's deceitful light
Above the pool where sedges grow;
And when the morning-sun shone bright,
It shone upon a field of snow.

They hung me on a bough so small,
The rook could built her nest no higher;
They fix'd me on the trembling ball
That crowns the steeple's quiv'ring spire;
They set me where the seas retire,
But drown with their returning tide;
And made me flee the mountain's fire,
When rolling from its burning side.

I've hung upon the ridgy steep
Of cliffs, and held the rambling brier;
I've plunged below the billowy deep,
Where air was sent me to respire;
I've been where hungry wolves retire;
And (to complete my woes) I've ran
Where Bedlam's crazy crew conspire
Against the life of reasoning man.

I've furl'd in storms the flapping sail,
By hanging from the topmast-head;
I've served the vilest slaves in jail,
And pick'd the dunghill's spoil for bread;
I've made the badger's hole my bed;
I've wander'd with a gipsy crew;
I've dreaded all the guilty dread,
And done what they would fear to do.[11]

On sand, where ebbs and flows the flood,
Midway they placed and bade me die;
Propp'd on my staff, I stoutly stood
When the swift waves came rolling by;
And high they rose, and still more high,
Till my lips drank the bitter brine;
I sobb'd convulsed, then cast mine eye,
And saw the tide's re-flowing sign.

And then, my dreams were such as nought
Could yield but my unhappy case;
I've been of thousand devils caught,
And thrust into that horrid place
Where reign dismay, despair, disgrace;
Furies with iron fangs were there,
To torture that accursed race
Doom'd to dismay, disgrace, despair.

Harmless I was; yet hunted down
For treasons, to my soul unfit;
I've been pursued through many a town,
For crimes that petty knaves commit;
I've been adjudged t' have lost my wit,
Because I preached so loud and well;
And thrown into the dungeon's pit,
For trampling on the pit of hell.

Such were the evils, man of sin,
That I was fated to sustain;
And add to all, without—within,
A soul defiled with every stain
That man's reflecting mind can pain;
That pride, wrong, rage, despair, can make;
In fact, they'd nearly touch'd my brain,
And reason on her throne would shake.

But pity will the vilest seek,
If punish'd guilt will not repine,—
I heard a heavenly Teacher speak,
And felt the SUN OF MERCY shine:
I hailed the light! the birth divine!
And then was seal'd among the few;
Those angry fiends beheld the sign,
And from me in an instant flew.

Come hear how thus the charmers cry
To wandering sheep, the strays of sin,
While some the wicket-gate pass by,
And some will knock and enter in:
Full joyful 'tis a soul to win,
For he that winneth souls is wise;
Now hark! the holy strains begin,
And thus the sainted preacher cries:[12]—

"Pilgrim, burthen'd with thy sin,
"Come the way to Zion's gate,
"There, till Mercy let thee in,
"Knock and weep and watch and wait.
"Knock!—He knows the sinner's cry:
"Weep!—He loves the mourner's tears:
"Watch!—for saving grace is nigh:
"Wait,—till heavenly light appears.

condemned to gaze, gives a tone of penetrating anguish to these verses."—GIFFORD.]

[10] [MS.:—Ills that no medicines can heal,
And griefs that no man can forget;
Whatever cares the mind can fret,
The spirits wear, the bosom gall—
Pain, hunger, prison, duns, and debt,
Foul-fiends and fear,—I've felt ye all.]

[11] ["There is great force in these two lines; but that which gives the last finish to this vision of despair is contained in these words:—
'And then, my dreams were such as naught
Could yield but my unhappy case.'"—GIFFORD.]

[12] It has been suggested to me, that this change from restlessness to repose, in the mind of Sir Eustace, is wrought by a methodistic call; and it is admitted to be such: a sober and rational conversion could not have happened while the disorder of the brain continued: yet the verses which follow, in a different measure, are not intended to make any religious persuasion appear ridiculous; they are to be supposed as the effect of memory in the disordered mind of the speaker, and, though evidently enthusiastic in respect to language, are not meant to convey any impropriety of sentiment.

"Hark! it is the Bridegroom's voice:
"Welcome, pilgrim, to thy rest;
"Now within the gate rejoice,
"Safe and seal'd and bought and blest!
"Safe—from all the lures of vice,
"Seal'd—by signs the chosen know,
"Bought—by love and life the price,
"Blest—the mighty debt to owe.

"Holy Pilgrim! what for thee
"In a world like this remain?
"From thy guarded breast shall flee
"Fear and shame, and doubt and pain.
"Fear—the hope of Heaven shall fly,
"Shame—from glory's view retire,
"Doubt—in certain rapture die,
"Pain—in endless bliss expire."

But though my day of grace was come,
Yet still my days of grief I find;
The former clouds' collected gloom
Still sadden the reflecting mind;
The soul, to evil things consign'd,
Will of their evil some retain;
The man will seem to earth inclined,
And will not look erect again.

Thus, though elect, I feel it hard
To lose what I possess'd before,
To be from all my wealth debarr'd,—
The brave Sir Eustace is no more:
But old I wax, and passing poor,
Stern, rugged men my conduct view;
They chide my wish, they bar my door,
'Tis hard—I weep—you see I do.—

Must you, my friends, no longer stay?
Thus quickly all my pleasures end;
But I'll remember, when I pray,
My kind physician and his friend;
And those sad hours, you deign to spend
With me, I shall requite them all;
Sir Eustace for his friends shall send,
And thank their love at Greyling Hall

VISITOR.

The poor Sir Eustace!—Yet his hope
Leads him to think of joys again;
And when his earthly visions droop,
His views of heavenly kind remain:
But whence that meek and humbled strain,
That spirit wounded, lost, resign'd?
Would not so proud a soul disdain
The madness of the poorest mind?

PHYSICIAN.

No! for the more he swell'd with pride,
The more he felt misfortune's blow;
Disgrace and grief he could not hide,
And poverty had laid him low:
Thus shame and sorrow working slow,
At length this humble spirit gave;
Madness on these began to grow,
And bound him to his fiends a slave.

Though the wild thoughts had touch'd his brain,
Then was he free:—So, forth he ran;
To soothe or threat, alike were vain:
He spake of fiends; look'd wild and wan;
Year after year, the hurried man
Obey'd those fiends from place to place;
Till his religious change began
To form a frenzied child of grace.

For, as the fury lost its strength,
The mind reposed; by slow degrees
Came lingering hope, and brought at length,
To the tormented spirit, ease:
This slave of sin, whom fiends could seize,
Felt or believed their power had end;—
"'Tis faith," he cried, "my bosom frees,
"And now my SAVIOUR is my friend."

But ah! though time can yield relief,
And soften woes it cannot cure;
Would we not suffer pain and grief,
To have our reason sound and sure?
Then let us keep our bosoms pure,
Our fancy's favourite flights suppress;
Prepare the body to endure,
And bend the mind to meet distress;
And then HIS guardian care implore,
Whom demons dread and men adore.

THE HALL OF JUSTICE.

IN TWO PARTS.[1]

Confiteor facere hoc annos; sed et altera causa est,
Anxietas animi, continuusque dolor.—Ovid.

MAGISTRATE, VAGRANT, CONSTABLE, &c.

VAGRANT.

TAKE, take away thy barbarous hand,
And let me to thy Master speak;
Remit awhile the harsh command,
And hear me, or my heart will break.

MAGISTRATE.

Fond wretch! and what canst thou relate,
But deads of sorrow, shame, and sin?
Thy crime is proved, thou know'st thy fate;
But come, thy tale!—begin, begin!—

VAGRANT.

My crime!——This sick'ning child to feed,
I seized the food, your witness saw;
I knew your laws forbade the deed,
But yielded to a stronger law.[2]

Know'st thou, to Nature's great command
All human laws are frail and weak?
Nay! frown not—stay his eager hand,
And hear me, or my heart will break.

In this, th' adopted babe I hold
With anxious fondness to my breast,
My heart's sole comfort I behold,
More dear than life, when life was blest;
I saw her pining, fainting, cold,
I begg'd—but vain was my request.

I saw the tempting food, and seized—
My infant-sufferer found relief;
And, in the pilfer'd treasure pleased,
Smiled on my guilt, and hush'd my grief.

But I have griefs of other kind,
Troubles and sorrows more severe;
Give me to ease my tortured mind,
Lend to my woes a patient ear;
And let me—if I may not find
A friend to help—find one to hear.

Yet nameless let me plead—my name
Would only wake the cry of scorn;
A child of sin, conceived in shame,
Brought forth in woe, to misery born.

My mother dead, my father lost,
I wander'd with a vagrant crew;
A common care, a common cost;
Their sorrows and their sins I knew;
With them, by want on error forced,
Like them, I base and guilty grew.

Few are my years, not so my crimes:
The age, which these sad looks declare,
Is Sorrow's work, it is not Time's,
And I am old in shame and care.[3]

Taught to believe the world a place
Where every stranger was a foe,
Train'd in the arts that mark our race,
To what new people could I go?
Could I a better life embrace,
Or live as virtue dictates? No!—

So through the land I wandering went,
And little found of grief or joy;
But lost my bosom's sweet content,
When first I loved—the Gipsy-Boy.

[1] [See Preface, *antè*, p. 100.]

[2] [Original MS.:—Or,

What is my crime?—a deed of love;
I fed my child with pilfer'd food:
Your laws will not the act approve;
The law of Nature deems it good.]

[3] [Original MS.:—

My years, indeed, are sad and few,
Though weak these limbs, and shrunk this frame:
For Grief has done what Time should do;
And I am old in care and shame.]

A sturdy youth he was and tall,
His looks would all his soul declare;
His piercing eyes were deep and small,
And strongly curl'd his raven-hair.

Yes, AARON had each manly charm,
All in the May of youthful pride,
He scarcely fear'd his father's arm,
And every other arm defied.—

Oft, when they grew in anger warm,
(Whom will not love and power divide?)
I rose, their wrathful souls to calm,
Not yet in sinful combat tried.

His father was our party's chief,
And dark and dreadful was his look;
His presence fill'd my heart with grief,
Although to me he kindly spoke.

With Aaron I delighted went,
His favour was my bliss and pride;
In growing hope our days we spent,
Love growing charms in either spied;
It saw them all which Nature lent,
It lent them all which she denied.

Could I the father's kindness prize,
Or grateful looks on him bestow,
Whom I beheld in wrath arise,
When Aaron sunk beneath his blow?

He drove him down with wicked hand,
It was a dreadful sight to see;
Then vex'd him, till he left the land,
And told his cruel love to me;
The clan were all at his command,
Whatever his command might be.

The night was dark, the lanes were deep,
And one by one they took their way;
He bade me lay me down and sleep,
I only wept and wish'd for day.

Accursed be the love he bore,
Accursed was the force he used,
So let him of his God implore
For mercy, and be so refused!

You frown again,—to show my wrong
Can I in gentle language speak?
My woes are deep, my words are strong,—
And hear me, or my heart will break.

MAGISTRATE.

I hear thy words, I feel thy pain;
Forbear awhile to speak thy woes;
Receive our aid, and then again
The story of thy life disclose.

For, though seduced and led astray,
Thou 'st travell'd far and wander'd long;
Thy God hath seen thee all the way,
And all the turns that led thee wrong.

PART II.

Quondam ridentes oculi, nunc fonte perenni
Deplorant pœnas nocte dieque suas.
Corn. Galli Eleg.

MAGISTRATE.

COME, now again thy woes impart,
Tell all thy sorrows, all thy sin;
We cannot heal the throbbing heart
Till we discern the wounds within.

Compunction weeps our guilt away,
The sinner's safety is his pain;
Such pangs for our offences pay,
And these severer griefs are gain.

VAGRANT.

The son came back—he found us wed,
Then dreadful was the oath he swore;—
His way through Blackburn Forest led,—
His father we beheld no more.

Of all our daring clan not one
Would on the doubtful subject dwell;
For all esteem'd the injured son,
And fear'd the tale which he could tell.

But I had mightier cause for fear,
For slow and mournful round my bed
I saw a dreadful form appear,—
It came when I and Aaron wed.

Yes! we were wed, I know my crime,—
We slept beneath the elmin tree;
But I was grieving all the time,
And Aaron frown'd my tears to see.

For he not yet had felt the pain
That rankles in a wounded breast;
He waked to sin, then slept again,
Forsook his God, yet took his rest.—

But I was forced to feign delight,
And joy in mirth and music sought,—
And mem'ry now recalls the night,
With such surprise and horror fraught,
That reason felt a moment's flight,
And left a mind to madness wrought.[4]

When waking, on my heaving breast
I felt a hand as cold as death:
A sudden fear my voice suppress'd,
A chilling terror stopp'd my breath.—

I seem'd—no words can utter how!
For there my father-husband stood,—

[4] [Original MS.:—

Compell'd to feast, in full delight,
When I was sad and wanted power,
Can I forget that dismal night?
Ah! how did I survive the hour?]

And thus he said:—"Will God allow,
"The great Avenger just and Good,
"A wife to break her marriage vow?
"A son to shed his father's blood?" [5]

I trembled at the dismal sounds,
But vainly strove a word to say;
So, pointing to his bleeding wounds,
The threat'ning spectre stalk'd away.[6]

I brought a lovely daughter forth,
His father's child, in Aaron's bed;
He took her from me in his wrath,
"Where is my child?"—"Thy child is dead."

'T was false—we wander'd far and wide,
Through town and country, field and fen,
Till Aaron, fighting, fell and died,
And I became a wife again.

I then was young:—my husband sold
My fancied charms for wicked price;
He gave me oft for sinful gold,
The slave, but not the friend of vice:—
Behold me, Heaven! my pains behold,
And let them for my sins suffice!

The wretch who lent me thus for gain,
Despised me when my youth was fled;
Then came disease, and brought me pain:—
Come, Death, and bear me to the dead!
For though I grieve, my grief is vain,
And fruitless all the tears I shed.

True, I was not to virtue train'd,
Yet well I knew my deeds were ill;
By each offence my heart was pain'd
I wept, but I offended still;
My better thoughts my life disdain'd,
But yet the viler led my will.

My husband died, and now no more
My smile was sought, or ask'd my hand,
A widow'd vagrant, vile and poor,
Beneath a vagrant's vile command.

Ceaseless I roved the country round,
To win my bread by fraudful arts,
And long a poor subsistence found,
By spreading nets for simple hearts.

Though poor, and abject, and despised,
Their fortunes to the crowd I told;
I gave the young the love they prized,
And promised wealth to bless the old.
Schemes for the doubtful I devised,
And charms for the forsaken sold.

At length for arts like these confined
In prison with a lawless crew,
I soon perceived a kindred mind,
And there my long-lost daughter knew;

His father's child, whom Aaron gave
To wander with a distant clan,
The miseries of the world to brave,
And be the slave of vice and man.

She knew my name—we met in pain.
Our parting pangs can I express?
She sail'd a convict o'er the main,
And left an heir to her distress.

This is that heir to shame and pain,
For whom I only could descry
A world of trouble and disdain:
Yet, could I bear to see her die,
Or stretch her feeble hands in vain,
And, weeping, beg of me supply?

No! though the fate thy mother knew
Was shameful! shameful though thy race
Have wander'd all a lawless crew,
Outcasts despised in every place;

Yet as the dark and muddy tide,
When far from its polluted source,
Becomes more pure and purified,
Flows in a clear and happy course;

In thee, dear infant! so may end
Our shame, in thee our sorrows cease!
And thy pure course will then extend,
In floods of joy, o'er vales of peace.

Oh! by the God who loves to spare,
Deny me not the boon I crave;
Let this loved child your mercy share,
And let me find a peaceful grave;

Make her yet spotless soul your care,
And let my sins their portion have;
Her for a better fate prepare,
And punish whom 't were sin to save!

MAGISTRATE.

Recall the word, renounce the thought,
Command thy heart and bend thy knee.
There is to all a pardon brought,
A ransom rich, assured and free;
'T is full when found, 't is found if sought,
Oh! seek it, till 't is seal'd to thee.

VAGRANT.

But how my pardon shall I know?

MAGISTRATE.

By feeling dread that 't is not sent,
By tears for sin that freely flow,
By grief, that all thy tears are spent,
By thoughts on that great debt we owe,
With all the mercy God has lent,
By suffering what thou canst not show,
Yet showing how thine heart is rent,
Till thou canst feel thy bosom glow,
And say, "My Saviour, I Repent!" [7]

[5] [MS.:—Or,

And there my father-husband stood—
I felt no words can tell you how—
As he was wont in angry mood,
And thus he cried, "Will God allow," &c.]

[6] The state of mind here described will account for a vision of this nature, without having recourse to any supernatural appearance.

[7] ["The Hall of Justice, or the story of the Gipsy Convict, is very nervous,—very shocking,—and very powerfully represented. It is written with very unusual power of language, and shows Mr. Crabbe to have great mastery over the tragic passions of pity and horror."—Jeffrey.]

WOMAN!

MR. LEDYARD, AS QUOTED BY MUNGO PARKE IN HIS TRAVELS INTO AFRICA:—

"To a Woman I never addressed myself in the language of "decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and "friendly answer. If I was hungry or thirsty, wet or sick, "they did not hesitate, like Men, to perform a generous "action: in so free and kind a manner did they contribute "to my relief, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest "draught, and if hungry, I ate the coarsest morsel with a "double relish."

PLACE the white man on Afric's coast,
Whose swarthy sons in blood delight,
Who of their scorn to Europe boast,
And paint their very demons white:
There, while the sterner sex disdains
To soothe the woes they cannot feel,
Woman will strive to heal his pains,
And weep for those she cannot heal:
Hers is warm pity's sacred glow;
From all her stores she bears a part,
And bids the spring of hope re-flow,
That languish'd in the fainting heart.

"What though so pale his haggard face,
"So sunk and sad his looks,"—she cries;
"And far unlike our nobler race,
"With crisped locks and rolling eyes;
"Yet misery marks him of our kind:
"We see him lost, alone, afraid;
"And pangs of body, griefs in mind,
"Pronounce him man, and ask our aid.

"Perhaps in some far-distant shore
"There are who in these forms delight;
"Whose milky features please them more,
"Than ours of jet thus burnished bright;
"Of such may be his weeping wife,
"Such children for their sire may call,
"And if we spare his ebbing life,
"Our kindness may preserve them all."

Thus her compassion Woman shows:
Beneath the line her acts are these;
Nor the wide waste of Lapland-snows
Can her warm flow of pity freeze:—
"From some sad land the stranger comes,
"Where joys like ours are never found;
"Let 's soothe him in our happy homes,
"Where freedom sits, with plenty crown'd.

"'T is good the fainting soul to cheer,
"To see the famish'd stranger fed;
"To milk for him the mother-deer,
"To smooth for him the furry bed.
"The powers above our Lapland bless
"With good no other people know;
"T' enlarge the joys that we possess,
"By feeling those that we bestow!"

Thus in extremes of cold and heat,
Where wandering man may trace his kind;
Wherever grief and want retreat,
In Woman they compassion find;
She makes the female breast her seat,
And dictates mercy to the mind.

Man may the sterner virtues know,
Determined justice, truth severe;
But female hearts with pity glow,
And Woman holds affliction dear;
For guiltless woes her sorrows flow,
And suffering vice compels her tear;
'T is hers to soothe the ills below,
And bid life's fairer views appear:
To Woman's gentle kind we owe
What comforts and delights us here;
They its gay hopes on youth bestow,
And care they soothe, and age they cheer.[1]

[1] [In Mr. Crabbe's note-book, which contains the original draught of "Woman," there occur also the following stanzas:—

A weary Traveller walk'd his way,
With grief and want and pain opprest:
His looks were sad, his locks were grey;
He sought for food, he sigh'd for rest.

A wealthy grazier pass'd—"Attend,"
The sufferer cried—"some aid allow:"—
"Thou art not of my parish, Friend;
Nor am I in mine office now."

He dropt, and more impatient pray'd—
A mild adviser heard the word:
"Be patient, Friend!" he kindly said,
"And wait the leisure of the Lord."

Another comes!—"Turn, stranger, turn!"
"Not so!" replied a voice: "I mean
"The candle of the Lord to burn
"With mine own flock on Save-all Green.

"To war with Satan, thrust for thrust;
"To gain my lamb he led astray;
"The Spirit drives me: on I must—
"Yea, woe is me, if I delay!"

But WOMAN came! by Heaven design'd
To ease the heart that throbs with pain—
She gave relief—abundant—kind—
And bade him go in peace again.]

THE BOROUGH.[1]

Paulo majora canamus.—VIRGIL.

TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND, MARQUIS OF GRANBY;

RECORDER OF CAMBRIDGE AND SCARBOROUGH;
LORD-LIEUTENANT AND CUSTOS ROTULORUM OF THE COUNTY OF LEICESTER;
K.G. AND LL.D.

MY LORD,

THE Poem for which I have ventured to solicit your Grace's attention was composed in a situation so near to Belvoir Castle, that the author had all the advantage to be derived from prospects extensive and beautiful, and from works of grandeur and sublimity: and though nothing of the influence arising from such situation should be discernible in these verses, either from want of adequate powers in the writer, or because his subjects do not assimilate with such views, yet would it be natural for him to indulge a wish that he might inscribe his labours to the lord of a scene which perpetually excited his admiration, and he would plead the propriety of placing the titles of the House of Rutland at the entrance of a volume written in the Vale of Belvoir.[2]

But, my Lord, a motive much more powerful than a sense of propriety, a grateful remembrance of benefits conferred by the noble family in which you preside, has been the great inducement for me to wish that I might be permitted to inscribe this work to your Grace: the honours of that time were to me unexpected, they were unmerited, and they were transitory: but since I am thus allowed to make public my gratitude, I am in some degree restored to the honour of that period; I have again the happiness to find myself favoured, and my exertions stimulated, by the condescension of the Duke of Rutland.

It was my fortune, in a poem which yet circulates, to write of the virtues, talents, and heroic death of Lord Robert Manners, and to bear witness to the affection of a brother whose grief was poignant, and to be soothed only by remembrance of his worth whom he so deeply deplored.[3] In a patron thus favourably predisposed, my Lord, I might look for much lenity, and could not fear the severity of cri-

1 ["The Borough," which was begun while Mr. Crabbe resided at Rendham, was completed during a visit to his native town of Aldborough, in the autumn of 1809, and published in February, 1810. In the preface he is found ascribing this new appearance to the extraordinary success of the "Parish Register;" and Mr. Jeffrey commenced his review of the "Borough" in these terms (*Edin. Rev.* 1810):—"We are very glad to meet with Mr. Crabbe so soon again; and particularly glad to find that his early return has been occasioned, in part, by the encouragement he received on his last appearance. This late spring of public favour, we hope, he will yet live to see ripen into mature fame. We scarcely know any poet who deserves it better; and are quite certain there is none who is more secure of keeping with posterity whatever he may win from his contemporaries."]

2 [Mr. Crabbe, in 1790, wrote, at Muston, an Essay on the Natural History of the Vale of Belvoir, which he contributed to Mr. Nichols's History of Leicestershire. The motto is from Drayton's Polyolbion:—

"Do but compare the country where I lie,
My hills and oulds will say, they are the island's eye;
Consider next my site, and say it doth excel;
Then come unto my soil, and you shall see it well,
With every grass and grain that Britain forth can bring;
I challenge any vale to show me but that thing
I cannot shew to her, that truly is my own."]

3 [See *antè*, pp. 33, 119, 121.]

tical examination: from your Grace, who, happily, have no such impediment to justice, I must not look for the same kind of indulgence. I am assured, by those whose situation gave them opportunity for knowledge, and whose abilities and attention guarded them from error, that I must not expect my failings will escape detection from want of discernment, neither am I to fear that any merit will be undistinguished through deficiency of taste. It is from this information, my Lord, and a consciousness of much which needs forgiveness, that I entreat your Grace to read my verses, with a wish, I had almost added, with a purpose to be pleased, and to make every possible allowance for subjects not always pleasing, for manners sometimes gross, and for language too frequently incorrect.

With the fullest confidence in your Grace's ability and favour, in the accuracy of your judgment, and the lenity of your decision; with grateful remembrance of benefits received, and due consciousness of the little I could merit: with prayers that your Grace may long enjoy the dignities of the House of Rutland, and continue to dictate improvement for the surrounding country;—I terminate an address, in which a fear of offending your Grace has made me so cautious in my expressions, that I may justly fear to offend many of my readers, who will think that something more of animation should have been excited by the objects I view, the benevolence I honour, and the gratitude I profess.

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
Your Grace's most obliged
and obedient humble servant,
Muston, Dec. 1809. George Crabbe.

PREFACE.

Whether, if I had not been encouraged by some proofs of public favour, I should have written the Poem now before the reader, is a question which I cannot positively determine; but I will venture to assert that I should not, in that case, have committed the work to the press; I should not have allowed my own opinion of it to have led me into further disappointment, against the voice of judges impartial and indifferent, from whose sentence it had been fruitless to appeal: the success of a late publication, therefore, may be fairly assigned as the principal cause for the appearance of this.

When the ensuing Letters were so far written that I could form an opinion of them, and when I began to conceive that they might not be unacceptable to the public, I felt myself prompted by duty, as well as interest, to put them to the press; I considered myself bound, by gratitude for the favourable treatment I had already received, to show that I was not unmindful of it; and, however this might be mixed with other motives, it operated with considerable force upon my mind, acting as a stimulus to exertions naturally tardy, and to expectations easily checked.

It must nevertheless be acknowledged that, although such favourable opinion had been formed, I was not able, with the requisite impartiality, to determine the comparative value of an unpublished manuscript and a work sent into the world. Books, like children, when established, have doubtless our parental affection and good wishes; we rejoice to hear that they are doing well, and are received and respected in good company; but it is to manuscripts in the study, as to children in the nursery, that our care, our anxiety, and our tenderness are principally directed: they are fondled as our endearing companions; their faults are corrected with the lenity of partial love, and their good parts are exaggerated by the strength of parental imagination; nor is it easy even for the more cool and reasonable among parents, thus circumstanced, to decide upon the comparative merits of their offspring, whether they be children of the bed or issue of the brain.

But however favourable my own opinion may have been, or may still be, I could not venture to commit so long a Poem to the press without some endeavour to obtain the more valuable opinion of less partial judges: at the same time, I am willing to confess that I have lost some portion of the timidity once so painful, and that I am encouraged to take upon myself the decision of various points which heretofore I entreated my friends to decide. Those friends were then my council whose opinion I was implicitly to follow; they are now advisers whose ideas I am at liberty to reject. This will not, I hope, seem like arrogance: it would be more safe, it would be more pleasant, still to have that reliance on the judgment of others; but it cannot always be obtained: nor are they, however friendly disposed, ever ready to lend a helping hand to him whom they consider as one who ought by this time to have cast away the timidity of inexperience,

and to have acquired the courage that would enable him to decide for himself.

When it is confessed that I have less assistance from my friends, and that the appearance of this work is in a great measure, occasioned by the success of a former; some readers will, I fear, entertain the opinion that the book before them was written in haste, and published without due examination and revisal: should this opinion be formed, there will doubtless occur many faults which may appear as originating in neglect: Now, readers are, I believe, disposed to treat with more than common severity those writers who have been led into presumption by the approbation bestowed on their diffidence, and into idleness and unconcern by the praises given to their attention. I am therefore even anxious it should be generally known that sufficient time and application were bestowed upon this work, and by this I mean that no material alteration would be effected by delay; it is true that this confession removes one plea for the errors of the book, want of *time*; but, in my opinion, there is not much consolation to be drawn by reasonable minds from this resource: if a work fails, it appears to be poor satisfaction when it is observed, that, if the author had taken more care, the event had been less disgraceful.

When the reader enters into the Poem, he will find the author retired from view, and an imaginary personage brought forward to describe his Borough for him; to him it seemed convenient to speak in the first person: but the inhabitant of a village, in the centre of the kingdom, could not appear in the character of a residing burgess in a large seaport; and when, with this point, was considered what relations were to be given, what manners delineated, and what situations described, no method appeared to be so convenient as that of borrowing the assistance of an ideal friend; by this means the reader is in some degree kept from view of any particular place, nor will he perhaps be so likely to determine where those persons reside, and what their connections, who are so intimately known to this man of straw.[1]

From the title of this Poem, some persons will, I fear, expect a political satire,—an attack upon corrupt principles in a general view, or upon the customs and manners of some particular place; of these they will find nothing satirised, nothing related. It may be that graver readers would have preferred a more historical account of so considerable a Borough—its charter privileges, trade, public structures, and subjects of this kind; but I have an apology for the omission of these things, in the difficulty of describing them, and in the utter repugnancy which subsists between the studies and objects of topography and poetry.[2] What I thought I could best describe, that I attempted:—the sea and the country in the immediate vicinity; the dwellings, and the inhabitants; some incidents and characters, with an exhibition of morals and manners, offensive perhaps to those of extremely delicate feelings, but sometimes, I hope, neither unamiable nor unaffecting: an Election, indeed, forms a part of one Letter, but the evil there described is one not greatly not generally deplored, and there are probably many places of this kind where it is not felt.

From the variety of relations, characters, and descriptions which a BOROUGH affords, several were rejected which a reader might reasonably expect to have met with: in this case he is entreated to believe that these, if they occurred to the author, were considered by him as beyond his ability, as subjects which he could not treat in a manner satisfactory to himself.[3] Possibly, the

[1] [An intimate personal friend of Mr. Crabbe says:—"Nevertheless the *general description* of "The Borough" is evidently that of Aldborough magnified—nay, by the poet's own confession it is so:—

'At her old house, her dress, her air the same,
I see mine ancient letter-loving dame:
If critics pardon what my friends approved,
Can I mine ancient widow pass unmoved?
Shall I not think what pains the matron took,
When first I trembled o'er the gilded book,' &c.
Letter 18.

Still is the *imaginary* town a vast enlargement of the real one, containing little more than a thousand inhabitants, and having neither hospital, nor alms-house, nor clubs; and, till lately, neither sects nor schools."]

[2] [On this dictum there is a pretty paragraph or two in "The Doctor:"—"The poet Crabbe has said that there subsists an utter repugnancy between the studies of topography and poetry. He must have intended by topography, when he said so, the mere definition of boundaries and specification of landmarks, such as are given in the advertisement of an estate for sale; and boys in certain parts of the country are taught to bear in mind by a remembrance in tail, when the bounds of a parish are walked by the local authorities. Such topography, indeed, bears as little relation to poetry as a map or chart to a picture. But if he had any wider meaning, it is evident, by the number of topographical poems, good, bad, and indifferent, with which our language abounds, that Mr. Crabbe's predecessors in verse, and his contemporaries also, have differed greatly from him in opinion upon this point. The Polyolbion, notwithstanding its commonplace personifications and its inartificial transitions, which are as abrupt as those in the Metamorphoses or Fasti, and not so graceful, is, nevertheless, a work as much to be valued by the students and lovers of English literature as by the writers of local history. Drayton himself, whose great talents were deservedly esteemed by the ablest of his contemporaries in the richest age of English poetry, thought he could not be more worthily employed than in what he calls the herculean task of this topographical poem; and in that belief he was encouraged by his friend and commentator Selden, to whose name the epithet of learned was, in old times, always and deservedly affixed. With how becoming a sense of its dignity and variety the poet entered upon his subject, these lines may show:—

'Thou powerful god of flames, in verse divinely great,
Touch my invention so with thy true genuine heat,
That high and noble things I slightly may not tell,
Nor light and idle toys my lines may vainly swell,'" &c.
THE DOCTOR, 1834.]

[3] ["Mr. Crabbe is distinguished from all other poets, both by the choice of his subjects, and by his manner of treating them. All his persons are taken from the lower ranks of life; and all his scenery from the most ordinary and familiar objects of nature or art. His characters and incidents, too, are as common as the elements out of which they are compounded are humble; and not only has he nothing prodigious or astonishing in any of his representations, but he has not even attempted to impart any of the ordinary colours of poetry to those vulgar materials. He has no moralising swains or sentimental tradesmen; and scarcely ever seeks to

admission of some will be thought to require more apology than the rejection of others: in such variety, it is to be apprehended, that almost every reader will find something not according with his ideas of propriety, or something repulsive to the tone of his feelings: nor could this be avoided but by the sacrifice of every event, opinion, and even expression, which could be thought liable to produce such effect; and this casting away so largely of our cargo, through fears of danger, though it might help us to clear it, would render our vessel of little worth when she came into port. I may likewise entertain a hope, that this very variety, which gives scope to objection and censure, will also afford a better chance for approval and satisfaction.[4]

charm us by the artless manners or lowly virtues of his personages. On the contrary, he has represented his villagers and humble burghers as altogether as dissipated, and more dishonest and discontented, than the profligates of higher life; and, instead of conducting us through blooming groves and pastoral meadows, has led us along filthy lanes and crowded wharfs, to hospitals, almshouses, and gin-shops. In some of these delineations he may be considered as the satirist of low life—an occupation sufficiently arduous, and in a great degree new and original in our language. By the mere force of his art, and the novelty of his style, he compels us to attend to objects that are usually neglected, and to enter into feelings from which we are in general but too eager to escape; and then trusts to nature for the effect of the representation. It is obvious that this is not a task for an ordinary hand, and that many ingenious writers, who make a very good figure with battles, nymphs, and moonlight landscapes, would find themselves quite helpless if set down among streets, harbours, and taverns."—JEFFREY.]

[4] [In one of Mr. Crabbe's note-books we find the following observations relative to the Borough:—"I have chiefly, if not exclusively, taken my subjects and characters from that order of society where the least display of vanity is generally to be found, which is placed between the humble and the great. It is in this class of mankind that more originality of character, more variety of fortune, will be met with; because, on the one hand, they do not live in the eye of the world, and therefore are not kept in awe by the dread of observation and indecorum; neither, on the other, are they debarred by their want of means from the cultivation of mind and the pursuits of wealth and ambition, which are necessary to the development of character displayed in the variety of situations to which this class is liable."]

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER I.

These did the ruler of the deep ordain,
To build proud navies, and to rule the main.
POPE's *Homer's Iliad*, b. vi.

Such scenes has Deptford, navy-building town,
Woolwich and Wapping, smelling strong of pitch;
Such Lambeth, envy of each band and gown,
And Twickenham such, which fairer scenes enrich.
POPE's *Imitation of Spenser*.

. . . . . Et cum cœlestibus undis
Æquoreæ miscentur aquæ: caret ignibus æther,
Cœcaque nox premitur tenebris hiemisque suisque;
Discutient tamen has, præbentque micantia lumen
Fulmina: fulmineis ardescunt ignibus undæ.
OVID. *Metamorph.* lib. xi.[1]

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

The Difficulty of describing Town Scenery—A Comparison with certain Views in the Country—The River and Quay—The Shipping and Business—Ship-building—Sea-Boys and Port-Views—Village and Town Scenery again compared—Walks from Town—Cottage and adjoining Heath, &c.—House of Sunday Entertainment—The Sea: a Summer and Winter View—A Shipwreck at Night, and its Effects on Shore—Evening Amusements in the Borough—An Apology for the imperfect View which can be given of these Subjects.

"DESCRIBE the Borough"—though our idle tribe
May love description, can we so describe,
That you shall fairly streets and buildings trace,
And all that gives distinction to a place?
This cannot be; yet moved by your request
A part I paint—let Fancy form the rest.
Cities and towns, the various haunts of men,
Require the pencil; they defy the pen:
Could he who sang so well the Grecian fleet,
So well have sung of alley, lane, or street?
Can measured lines these various buildings show,
The Town-Hall Turning, or the Prospect Row?
Can I the seats of wealth and want explore,
And lengthen out my lays from door to door?
Then let thy Fancy aid me—I repair
From this tall mansion of our last year's Mayor,
Till we the outskirts of the Borough reach,
And these half-buried buildings next the beach,
Where hang at open doors the net and cork,
While squalid sea-dames mend the meshy work;
Till comes the hour when fishing through the tide
The weary husband throws his freight aside;
A living mass which now demands the wife,
Th' alternate labours of their humble life.
Can scenes like these withdraw thee from thy wood,
Thy upland forest or thy valley's flood?
Seek then thy garden's shrubby bound, and look,
As it steals by, upon the bordering brook;[2]
That winding streamlet, limpid, lingering slow,
Where the reeds whisper when the zephyrs blow;
Where in the midst, upon a throne of green,
Sits the large Lily[3] as the water's queen;
And makes the current, forced awhile to stay,
Murmur and bubble as it shoots away;
Draw then the strongest contrast to that stream,
And our broad river will before thee seem.
With ceaseless motion comes and goes the tide,
Flowing, it fills the channel vast and wide;
Then back to sea, with strong majestic sweep
It rolls, in ebb yet terrible and deep;
Here Samphire-banks[4] and Salt-wort[5] bound the flood,
There stakes and sea-weeds withering on the mud;
And higher up, a ridge of all things base,
Which some strong tide has roll'd upon the place.
Thy gentle river boasts its pigmy boat,
Urged on by pains, half-grounded, half afloat:
While at her stern an angler takes his stand,
And marks the fish he purposes to land;
From that clear space, where, in the cheerful ray
Of the warm sun, the scaly people play.

[1] ["Sweet waters mingle with the briny main:
No star appears to lend his friendly light;
Darkness and tempest make a double night:
But flashing fires disclose the deep by turns,
And while the lightnings blaze, the water burns."
DRYDEN.]

[2] [See *antè*, p. 56. The parsonage at Muston, here alluded to, looked full on the churchyard, by no means like the common forbidding receptacles of the dead, but truly ornamental ground; for some fine elms partially concealed the small beautiful church and its spire, while the eye, travelling through their stems, rested on the banks of a stream and a picturesque old bridge: the garden enclosed the other two sides of this churchyard; but the crown of the whole was a gothic archway, cut through a thick hedge and many boughs, for through this opening, as in the deep frame of a picture, appeared, in the centre of the aerial canvas, the unrivalled Belvoir.]

[3] The white water-lily, Nymphæa alba.

[4] The jointed glasswort, Salicornia, is here meant, not the true samphire, the Crithmum maritimum.

[5] The Salsola of botanists.

Far other craft our prouder river shows,
Hoys,[6] pinks,[7] and sloops: brigs, brigantines,[8]
and snows:[9]
Nor angler we on our wide stream descry,
But one poor dredger where his oysters lie:
He, cold and wet, and driving with the tide,
Beats his weak arms against his tarry side,
Then drains the remnant of diluted gin,
To aid the warmth that languishes within;
Renewing oft his poor attempts to beat
His tingling fingers into gathering heat.
He shall again be seen when evening comes,
And social parties crowd their favourite rooms:
Where on the table pipes and papers lie,
The steaming bowl or foaming tankard by;
'T is then, with all these comforts spread around,
They hear the painful dredger's welcome sound;
And few themselves the savoury boon deny,
The food that feeds, the living luxury.
Yon is our Quay![10] those smaller hoys from
town,
Its various ware, for country-use, bring down;
Those laden waggons, in return, impart
The country-produce to the city mart;
Hark! to the clamour in that miry road,
Bounded and narrow'd by yon vessel's load;
The lumbering wealth she empties round the place,
Package, and parcel, hogshead, chest, and case:
While the loud seaman and the angry hind,
Mingling in business, bellow to the wind.
Near these a crew amphibious, in the docks,
Rear, for the sea, those castles on the stocks:
See! the long keel, which soon the waves must hide;
See! the strong ribs which form the roomy side;
Bolts yielding slowly to the sturdiest stroke,
And planks[11] which curve and crackle in the
smoke.
Around the whole rise cloudy wreaths, and far
Bear the warm pungence of o'er-boiling tar.
Dabbling on shore half-naked sea-boys crowd,
Swim round a ship, or swing upon the shroud;
Or in a boat purloin'd, with paddles play,
And grow familiar with the watery way:
Young though they be, they feel whose sons they
are,
They know what British seamen do and dare;
Proud of that fame, they raise and they enjoy
The rustic wonder of the village-boy.
Before you bid these busy scenes adieu,
Behold the wealth that lies in public view,
Those far extended heaps of coal and coke,
Where fresh-fill'd lime-kilns breath their stifling
smoke.
This shall pass off, and you behold, instead,
The night-fire gleaming on its chalky bed;
When from the Lighthouse brighter beams will rise,
To show the shipman where the shallow lies.
Thy walks are ever pleasant; every scene
Is rich in beauty, lively, or serene ——
Rich—is that varied view with woods around,
Seen from the seat within the shrubb'ry bound;
Where shines the distant lake, and where appear
From ruins bolting, unmolested deer;
Lively—the village-green, the inn, the place,
Where the good widow schools her infant-race.
Shops, whence are heard the hammer and the saw,
And village-pleasures unreproved by law:
Then how serene! when in your favourite room,
Gales from your jasmines soothe the evening
gloom;
When from your upland paddock you look down,
And just perceive the smoke which hides the town;
When weary peasants at the close of day
Walk to their cots, and part upon the way;
When cattle slowly cross the shallow brook,
And shepherds pen their folds, and rest upon their
crook.[12]
We prune our hedges, prime our slender trees,
And nothing looks untutor'd and at ease,
On the wide heath, or in the flow'ry vale,
We scent the vapours of the sea-born gale;
Broad-beaten paths lead on from stile to stile,
And sewers from streets the road-side banks defile;
Our guarded fields a sense of danger show,
Where garden-crops with corn and clover grow;
Fences are form'd of wreck and placed around,
(With tenters tipp'd) a strong repulsive bound;
Wide and deep ditches by the gardens run,
And there in ambush lie the trap and gun;
Or yon broad board, which guards each tempting
prize,
"Like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies."[13]
There stands a cottage with an open door,
Its garden undefended blooms before:
Her wheel is still, and overturn'd her stool,
While the lone Widow seeks the neighb'ring pool:
This gives us hope, all views of town to shun—
No! here are tokens of the Sailor-son;
That old blue jacket, and that shirt of check,
And silken kerchief for the seaman's neck;
Sea-spoils and shells from many a distant shore,
And furry robe from frozen Labrador.
Our busy streets and sylvan-walks between,
Fen, marshes, bog and heath all intervene;
Here pits of crag, with spongy, plashy base,
To some enrich th' uncultivated space:

[6] [A small vessel, usually rigged as a sloop, and employed in carrying passengers and goods from one place to another, particularly on the sea-coast. [7] The name given to ships with a very narrow stern. [8] Small merchant ships with two masts. [9] A vessel equipped with two masts, resembling the main and foremasts of a ship, and a third small mast just abaft the mainmast.—BURNEY.]

[10] [The Quay of Slaughden, where the poet, in early life, was employed by his father in piling up butter-casks, &c., in the dress of a common warehouseman; and whence, in the year 1779, he embarked on board a sloop, with three pounds in his pocket, to seek his fortune in the metropolis. See *ante*, pp. 6, 9, 13.]

[11] The curvature of planks for the sides of a ship, &c., is, I am informed, now generally made by the power of steam. Fire is nevertheless still used for boats and vessels of the smaller kind.

[12] [" Without the romantic mellowness which envelopes the landscape of Goldsmith, or the freshness and hilarity of colouring which breathe in that of Graham, this sketch is, perhaps, superior to both in distinctness, animation, and firmness of touch; and to these is added a peculiar air of facility and freedom."—GIFFORD.]

[13] [" Where London's column, pointing to the skies,
Like a tall bully, lifts the head and lies."—
Pope's allusion being to the *anti-catholic* inscription on the monument erected after the great fire of London.]

For there are blossoms rare, and curious rush,
The gale's[14] rich balm, and sun-dew's crimson blush,
Whose velvet leaf with radiant beauty dress'd,
Forms a gay pillow for the plover's breast.
Not distant far, a house commodious made,
(Lonely yet public stands) for Sunday-trade;
Thither, for this day free, gay parties go,
Their tea-house walk, their tippling rendezvous;
There humble couples sit in corner-bowers,
Or gaily ramble for th' allotted hours;
Sailors and lasses from the town attend,
The servant-lover, the apprentice-friend;
With all the idle social tribes who seek
And find their humble pleasures once a week.
Turn to the watery world!—but who to thee
(A wonder yet unview'd) shall paint—the Sea?
Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,
When lull'd by zephyrs, or when roused by storms,[15]
Its colours changing, when from clouds and sun
Shades after shades upon the surface run;
Embrown'd and horrid now, and now serene,
In limpid blue, and evanescent green;
And oft the foggy banks on ocean lie,[16]
Lift the fair sail, and cheat th' experienced eye.[17]
Be it the summer-noon: a sandy space
The ebbing tide has left upon its place;
Then just the hot and stony beach above,
Light twinkling streams in bright confusion move;
(For heated thus, the warmer air ascends,
And with the cooler in its fall contends)—
Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
An equal motion; swelling as it sleeps,
Then slowly sinking; curling to the strand,
Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the rigid sand,
Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
And back return in silence, smooth and slow.
Ships in the calm seem anchor'd; for they glide
On the still sea, urged solely by the tide:
Art thou not present, this calm scene before,
Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,
And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more?

Yet sometimes comes a ruffling cloud to make
The quiet surface of the ocean shake;
As an awaken'd giant with a frown
Might show his wrath, and then to sleep sink down.
View now the Winter-storm! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud:
Th' unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had roll'd in view of boding men on shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes show'd his form,
Dark as the cloud, and furious as the storm.
All where the eye delights, yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so swell'd and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch;
Curl'd as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then re-flowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Roll'd by their rage, and shall to ages last.[18]
Far off the Petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.[19]
High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flights of Wild-ducks stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north,
Day after day, flight after flight, go forth.[20]
In-shore their passage tribes of Sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge;
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly
Far back, then turn, and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry;

[14] [Another name for the candle-berry.]

[15] ["Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving;—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone."
BYRON.]

[16] Of the effect of these mists, known by the name of fog-banks, wonderful and indeed incredible relations are given; but their property of appearing to elevate ships at sea, and to bring them in view, is, I believe, generally acknowledged.

[17] [One of the most remarkable facts respecting aërial images presented itself to Mr. Scoresby, in a voyage to Greenland, in 1822. Having seen an inverted image of a ship in the air, he directed to it his telescope; he was able to discover it to be his father's ship, which was at the time below the horizon. "It was," says he, "so well defined, that I could distinguish by a telescope every sail, the general rig of the ship, and its particular character; insomuch that I confidently pronounced it to be my father's ship, the Fame, which it afterwards proved to be; though, on comparing notes with my father, I found that our relative position at the time gave a distance from one another of very nearly thirty miles, being about seventeen miles beyond the horizon, and some leagues beyond the limit of direct vision."—BREWSTER.]

[18] ["A prospect of the ocean inspires Mr. Crabbe with congenial sublimity. The winter-storm is detailed with a masterly and interesting exactness."—GIFFORD.]

[19] [The storm-petrel is the true "Mother Carey's chicken" of the sailors, and also the "witch," the "spency," the "storm-finch," and a variety of other names, the abundance of which shows that it is at once a bird of common occurrence and of some interest. During its Pelasgic period, it is seen on most parts of the seas, especially those on the north, west, and south-west of Britain, where it is the last bird to leave the outward-bound ship, and the first to meet ships returning home. It plays about the vessels, and outstrips their swiftest course, skimming the surface of the water with equal ease and grace, and tipping so regularly with wings and feet, that she appears to be running on all-fours. The wings do not, however, get wet or splash, and the bird can make wing in any direction of a moderate wind, apparently with very little fatigue.—MUDIE.]

[20] [Wild-ducks fly at a considerable height in the air, and in the form of inclined lines or triangles. When they rest or sleep on the water, some of the band are always awake, to watch for the common safety, and to sound the alarm on the approach of danger. Hence they are with difficulty surprised; and hence the fowler, who goes in pursuit of them, requires to exert all his cunning, and frequently no inconsiderable degree of toil and patience.—SHAW.]

Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest.[21]
Darkness begins to reign; the louder wind
Appals the weak and awes the firmer mind;
But frights not him, whom evening and the spray
In part conceal—yon Prowler on his way:
Lo! he has something seen; he runs apace,
As if he fear'd companion in the chase;
He sees his prize, and now he turns again,
Slowly and sorrowing,—"Was your search in vain?"
Gruffly he answers, "'T is a sorry sight!
"A seaman's body; there 'll be more to-night!"
Hark! to those sounds! they 're from distress at sea:
How quick they come! What terrors may there be!
Yes, 't is a driven vessel: I discern
Lights, signs of terror, gleaming from the stern;
Others behold them too, and from the town
In various parties seamen hurry down;
Their wives pursue, and damsels urged by dread,
Lest men so dear be into danger led;
Their head the gown has hooded, and their call
In this sad night is piercing like the squall;
They feel their kinds of power, and when they meet,
Chide, fondle, weep, dare, threaten, or entreat.
See one poor girl, all terror and alarm,
Has fondly seized upon her lover's arm;
"Thou shalt not venture;" and he answers "No!
"I will not:"—still she cries, "Thou shalt not go,"
No need of this; not here the stoutest boat
Can through such breakers, o'er such billows float,
Yet may they view these lights upon the beach,
Which yield them hope, whom help can never reach.
From parted clouds the moon her radiance throws
On the wild waves, and all the danger shows;
But shows them beaming in her shining vest,
Terrific splendour! gloom in glory dress'd!
This for a moment, and then clouds again
Hide every beam, and fear and darkness reign.[22]
But hear we not those sounds? Do lights appear?
I see them not! the storm alone I hear:
And lo! the sailors homeward take their way;
Man must endure—let us submit and pray.
Such are our Winter-views: but night comes on—
Now business sleeps, and daily cares are gone;
Now parties form, and some their friends assist
To waste the idle hours at sober whist;
The tavern's pleasure or the concert's charm
Unnumber'd moments of their sting disarm:
Play-bills and open doors a crowd invite,
To pass off one dread portion of the night;
And show and song and luxury combined,
Lift off from man this burthen of mankind.
Others advent'rous walk abroad and meet
Returning parties pacing through the street,
When various voices, in the dying day,
Hum in our walks, and greet us in our way;
When tavern-lights flit on from room to room,
And guide the tippling sailor staggering home:
There as we pass, the jingling bells betray
How business rises with the closing day:
Now walking silent, by the river's side,
The ear perceives the rippling of the tide;
Or measured cadence of the lads who tow
Some enter'd hoy, to fix her in her row;
Or hollow sound, which from the parish-bell
To some departed spirit bids farewell!
Thus shall you something of our Borough know,
Far as a verse, with Fancy's aid, can show.
Of Sea or River, of a Quay or Street,
The best description must be incomplete,
But when a happier theme succeeds, and when
Men are our subjects and the deeds of men;
Then may we find the Muse in happier style,
And we may sometimes sigh and sometimes smile.[23]

LETTER II.

. . . . Festinat enim decurrere velox
Flosculus angustæ miseræque brevissima vitæ
Portio! dum bibimus, dum serta, unguenta, puellas
Poscimus, obrepit non intellecta senectus.—Juv. Sat. ix.[1]

And when at last thy Love shall die,
Wilt thou receive his parting breath?
Wilt thou repress each struggling sigh,
And cheer with smiles the bed of death?—Percy.

THE CHURCH.

Several Meanings of the Word *Church*—The Building so called, here intended—Its Antiquity and Grandeur—Columns and Aisles—The Tower: the Stains made by Time compared with the mock antiquity of the Artist—Progress of Vegetation on such Buildings—Bells—Tombs: one in decay—Mural Monuments, and the Nature of their Inscriptions—An Instance in a departed Burgess—Churchyard Graves—Mourners for the Dead—A Story of a betrothed Pair in humble Life, and Effects of Grief in the Survivor.

"What is a Church?"—Let Truth and Reason speak,
They would reply, "The faithful, pure, and meek;

[21] [Water-fowl, in a peculiar manner, discover, in their flight, some determined aim. They eagerly coast the river, or return to the sea; bent on some purpose of which they never lose sight. But the evolutions of the gull appear capricious and undirected, both when she flies alone and in large companies. The more, however, her character suffers as a loiterer, the more it is raised in picturesque value by her continuing longer before the eye, and displaying, in her elegant sweeps along the air, her sharp-pointed wings and her bright silvery hue. She is beautiful, also, not only on the wing, but when she floats, in numerous assemblies, on the water; or when she rests on the shore; dotting either one or the other with white spots, which, minute as they are, are very picturesque.—Gilpin.]

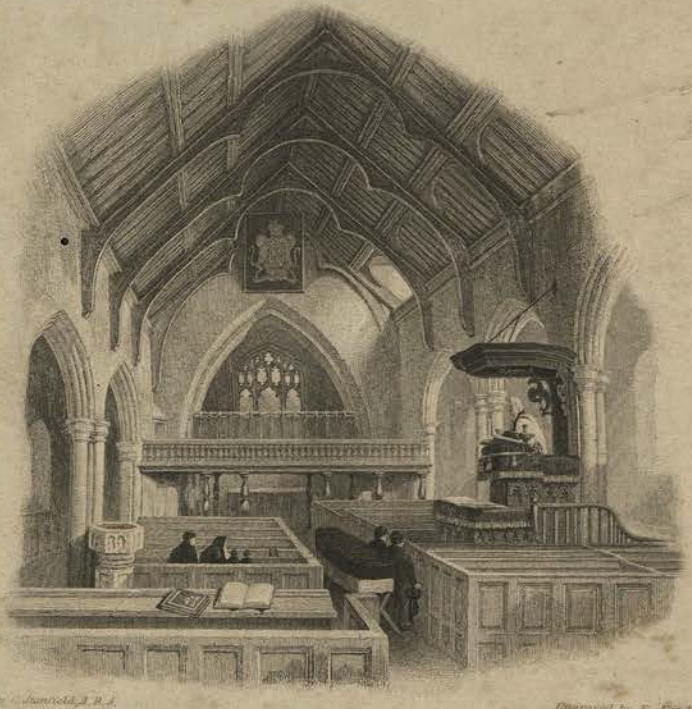
[22] ["The signals of distress are heard—the inhabitants of the Borough crowd to the strand; but the boisterousness of the sea precludes all possibility of affording assistance to the crew of the distressed vessel. 'Yet,' observes the poet, in lines of dreadful meaning,—

'Yet may they view those lights upon the beach,
Which yield them hope, whom help can never reach.

The sudden appearance of the moon, breaking at such a moment from a cloud over the tempestuous waste, is superlatively described. The imposing tumult of these scenes scarcely permits us to remark how finely in these passages the grandeur of the subject is supported by that of the verse."—Gifford.]

[23] This promise to the reader, that he should both smile and sigh in the perusal of the following Letters may appear vain, and more than an author ought to promise; but let it be considered that the character assumed is that of a friend, who gives an account of objects, persons, and events to his correspondent, and who was therefore at liberty, without any imputation of this kind, to suppose in what manner he would be affected by such descriptions.

[1] ["Lo! while we give the unregarded hour
To revelry and joy, in Pleasure's bower,



Drawn by C. Stanfield, A.R.A. Engraved by E. Finden.

Crabbe's First Church.

Here large plain columns rise in solemn style,
Nor'd have the gleam they made in cimer aile.

LONDON.
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1869.

" From Christian folds, the one selected race,
" Of all professions, and in every place."
" What is a Church?"—"A flock," our Vicar cries,
" Whom bishops govern and whom priests advise;
" Wherein are various states and due degrees,
" The Bench for honour, and the Stall for ease;
" That ease be mine, which, after all his cares,
" The pious, peaceful prebendary shares."
" What is a Church?"—Our honest Sexton tells,
" 'T is a tall building, with a Tower and bells;
" Where priest and clerk with joint exertion strive
" To keep the ardour of their flock alive;
" That, by its periods eloquent and grave;
" This, by responses, and a well-set stave:
" These for the living; but when life be fled,
" I toll myself the requiem for the dead."[2]
'T is to this Church I call thee, and that place
Where slept our fathers when they 'd run their race:
We too shall rest, and then our children keep
Their road in life, and then, forgotten, sleep;
Meanwhile the building slowly falls away,
And, like the builders, will in time decay.
The old Foundation—but it is not clear
When it was laid—you care not for the year;
On this, as parts decayed by time and storms,
Arose these various disproportion'd forms;
Yet Gothic all—the learn'd who visit us
(And our small wonders) have decided thus:—
" Yon noble Gothic arch," " That Gothic door;"
So have they said; of proof you 'll need no more.
Here large plain columns rise in solemn style,
You 'd love the gloom they make in either aisle;
When the sun's rays, enfeebled as they pass
(And shorn of splendour) through the storied glass,
Faintly display the figures on the floor,
Which pleased distinctly in their place before.
But ere you enter, yon bold Tower survey,
Tall and entire, and venerably grey,
For time has soften'd what was harsh when new,
And now the stains are all of sober hue;

The living stains which Nature's hand alone,
Profuse of life, pours forth upon the stone:
For ever growing; where the common eye
Can but the bare and rocky bed descry;
There Science loves to trace her tribes minute,
The juiceless foliage, and the tasteless fruit;
There she perceives them round the surface creep,
And while they meet their due distinction keep;
Mix'd but not blended; each its name retains,
And these are Nature's ever-during stains.
And wouldst thou, Artist! with thy tints and brush,
Form shades like these? Pretender, where thy blush?[3]
In three short hours shall thy presuming hand
Th' effect of three slow centuries command?[4]
Thou may'st thy various greens and greys contrive;
They are not Lichens,[5] nor like aught alive;—
But yet proceed, and when thy tints are lost,
Fled in the shower, or crumbled by the frost;
When all thy work is done away as clean
As if thou never spread'st thy grey and green;
Then may'st thou see how Nature's work is done,
How slowly true she lays her colours on;
When her least speck upon the hardest flint
Has mark and form, and is a living tint;
And so embodied with the rock, that few
Can the small germ upon the substance view.[6]
Seeds, to our eyes invisible, will find
On the rude rock the bed that fits their kind;
There, in the rugged soil, they safely dwell,
Till showers and snows the subtle atoms swell,
And spread th' enduring foliage;—then we trace
The freckled flower upon the flinty base;
These all increase, till in unnoticed years
The stony tower as grey with age appears;
With coats of vegetation, thinly spread,
Coat above coat, the living on the dead:
These then dissolve to dust, and make a way
For bolder foliage, nursed by their decay:

While now, for rosy wreaths our brows to twine,
And now for nymphs we call, and now for wine;
The noiseless foot of Time steals swiftly by,
And ere we dream of manhood, age is nigh.—

" I believe that there was no translation of this satire in Shakspeare's time; yet he has given, with kindred genius, a copy of *obrepit non intellecta senectus*:—

'on our quick'st attempts,
The noiseless and inaudible foot of Time
Steals ere we can effect them.' "—GIFFORD.]

[2] [The following description has always been considered a correct one of Aldborough church, where Mr. Crabbe first officiated as a clergyman.]

[3] Nothing, I trust, in this and the preceding paragraph, which relates to the imitation of what are called weather-stains on buildings, will seem to any invidious or offensive. I wished to make a comparison between those minute and curious bodies which cover the surface of some edifices, and those kinds of stains which are formed of boles and ochres, and laid on with a brush. Now, as the work of time cannot be anticipated in such cases, it may be very judicious to have recourse to such expedients as will give to a recent structure the venerable appearance of antiquity; and in this case, though I might still observe the vast difference between the living varieties of nature and the distant imitation of the artist, yet I could not forbear to make use of his dexterity, because he could not clothe my freestone with *mucor*, *lichen*, and *byssus*.—[There is much characteristic simplicity in this apology. About the period at which this *Letter* was written, Mr. Crabbe had called upon the Rev. J. Kendall, rector of Barrowby, who had shown him an imitation on his own walls, which, in the judgment of some, appear preferable to the actual *mucor*, &c.]

[4] If it should be objected, that centuries are not slower than hours, because the speed of time must be uniform, I would answer, that I understand so much, and mean that they are slower in no other sense than because they are not finished so soon.

[5] [In botany, a genus of the class Cryptogamia. Since the publication of the *Species Plantarum* of Linnæus, in which he described only eighty-one species of lichens, more than a thousand new ones have been discovered. Their places of growth are various; some on the most elevated and exposed rocks, others on the trunks of trees, and some on the surface of the ground.]

[6] This kind of vegetation, as it begins upon siliceous stones, is very thin, and frequently not to be distinguished from the surface of the flint. The byssus jolithus of Linnæus (lepraria jolithus of the present system), an adhesive carmine crust on rocks and old buildings, was, even by scientific persons, taken for the substance on which it spread. A great variety of these minute vegetables are to be found in some parts of the coast, where the beach, formed of stones of various kinds, is undisturbed, and exposed to every change of weather; in this situation the different species of lichen, in their different stages of growth, have an appearance interesting and agreeable even to those who are ignorant of, and indifferent to, the cause.

The long-enduring Ferns[7] in time will all
Die and depose their dust upon the wall;
Where the wing'd seed may rest, till many a flower
Show Flora's triumph o'er the falling tower.
But ours yet stands, and has its Bells renown'd
For size magnificent and solemn sound;
Each has its motto: some contrived to tell,
In monkish rhyme, the uses of a bell;[8]
Such wond'rous good, as few conceive could spring
From ten loud coppers when their clappers swing.
Enter'd the Church—we to a tomb proceed,
Whose names and titles few attempt to read;
Old English letters, and those half pick'd out,
Leave us, unskilful readers, much in doubt;
Our sons shall see its more degraded state;
The tomb of grandeur hastens to its fate;
That marble arch, our sexton's favourite show,
With all those ruff'd and painted pairs below;
The noble Lady and the Lord who rest
Supine, as courtly dame and warrior drest;
All are departed from their state sublime,
Mangled and wounded in their war with Time
Colleagued with mischief: here a leg is fled.
And lo! the Baron with but half a head:
Midway is cleft the arch; the very base
Is batter'd round and shifted from its place.
Wonder not, Mortal, at thy quick decay—
See! men of marble piecemeal melt away;
When whose the image we no longer read,
But monuments themselves memorials need.[9]
With few such stately proofs of grief or pride,
By wealth erected, is our Church supplied;
But we have mural tablets, every size,
That woe could wish, or vanity devise.

Death levels man,—the wicked and the just,
The wise, the weak, lie blended in the dust;
And by the honours dealt to every name,
The King of Terrors seems to level fame.
—See! here lamented wives, and every wife
The pride and comfort of her husband's life;
Here, to her spouse, with every virtue graced,
His mournful widow has a trophy placed;
And here 't is doubtful if the duteous son,
Or the good father, be in praise outdone.
This may be Nature: when our friends we lose,
Our alter'd feelings alter too our views;
What in their tempers teased us or distress'd,
Is, with our anger and the dead, at rest;
And much we grieve, no longer trial made,
For that impatience which we then display'd;
Now to their love and worth of every kind,
A soft compunction turns th' afflicted mind;
Virtues neglected then, adored become,
And graces slighted, blossom on the tomb.
'T is well; but let not love nor grief believe
That we assent (who neither loved nor grieve)
To all that praise which on the tomb is read,
To all that passion dictates for the dead;
But more indignant, we the tomb deride,
Whose bold inscription flattery sells to pride.[10]
Read of this Burgess—on the stone appear
How worthy he! how virtuous! and how dear!
What wailing was there when his spirit fled,
How mourn'd his lady for her lord when dead,
And tears abundant through the town were shed;
See! he was liberal, kind, religious, wise,
And free from all disgrace and all disguise;[11]

[7] ["We have the receipt of fern-seed; we walk invisible." SHAKSPEARE, *Hen. IV.*]

[8] [The baptism of church bells was anciently common in England, and is still practised in many Roman Catholic countries. "The priest," says Lord Kaimes, "assisted by some of his brethren, mumbles over some prayers and sprinkles the outside with holy-water, while they wash the inside with the same precious liquor. The priest then draws seven crosses on the outside, and four on the inside, with consecrated oil. Then a censer of frankincense is put under the bell to smoke it; and the whole concludes with a prayer." (*Sketches of Man*, vol. iv. p. 381.) The bell, thus christened and consecrated, was esteemed to be endued with great powers. Its "*uses*" and faculties are six in number, which are thus enumerated and translated by old Fuller:—

"Funera plango . . . Men's death I tell by doleful knell.
Fulmina frango . . Lightning and thunder I break asunder.
Sabbata pango . . . On sabbath all to church I call.
Excito lentos . . . The sleepy head I raise from bed.
Dissipo ventos . . . The winds so fierce I doe disperse.
Paco cruentos . . . Men's cruel rage I doe asswage."

"The passing-bell," says Grose, "was anciently rung for two purposes: one to bespeak the prayers of all good Christians for a soul just departing: the other, to drive away the evil spirits who stood at the bed's foot, and about the house, ready to seize their prey, or at least to terrify and molest the soul in its passage; but by the ringing of that bell (for Durandus informs us evil spirits are much afraid of bells) they were kept aloof."]

[9] In the course of a long poem, it is very difficult to avoid a recurrence of the same thoughts, and of similar expressions; and, however careful I have been myself in detecting and removing this kind of repetitions, my readers, I question not, would, if disposed to seek them, find many remaining. For these, I can only plead that common excuse—they are the offences of a bad memory, and not of voluntary inattention; to which I must add the difficulty (I have already mentioned) of avoiding the error; this kind of plagiarism will therefore, I conceive, be treated with lenity; and of the more criminal kind—borrowing from others—I plead, with much confidence, "Not guilty." But while I claim exemption from guilt, I do not affirm that much of sentiment and much of expression may not be detected in the vast collection of English poetry. It is sufficient for an author, that he uses not the words or ideas of another without acknowledgment; and this, and no more than this, I mean, by disclaiming debts of the kind; yet resemblances are sometimes so very striking, that it requires faith in a reader to admit they were undersigned. A line in this letter,

"And monuments themselves memorials need,"

was written long before the author, in an accidental recourse to Juvenal, read—

"Quandoquidem data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulchris."* *Sat.* x. 146.

and for this, I believe, the reader will readily give me credit.

[10] ["Hence bards, like Proteus long in vain tied down,
Escape in monsters, and amaze the town:
Hence hymning Tyburn's elegiac lines,
Hence journals, medleys, mercuries, magazines,
SEPULCHRAL LIES, our holy walls to grace," &c.—POPE.

"This," says Warburton, "is a just satire on the flatteries and falsehoods admitted to be inscribed on the walls of churches, in epitaphs. The following epigram alludes to the too long and sometimes fulsome epitaphs written by Dr. Friend, in pure Latinity indeed, but full of antitheses:—

'FRIEND! in your epitaphs I'm griev'd
So very much is said:
One half will never be believ'd,
The other never read.'"]

[11] ["Death," says Bishop Horne, "may be said, with almost equal propriety, to confer as well as to level all distinctions. In consequence of that event, a kind of chemical

* ["For, like their mouldering tenants, tombs decay;
And, with the dust they hide, are swept away."
GIFFORD.]

His sterling worth, which words cannot express,
Lives with his friends, their pride and their distress.
All this of Jacob Holmes? for his the name;
He thus kind, liberal, just, religious?—Shame!
What is the truth? Old Jacob married thrice;
He dealt in coals, and av'rice was his vice;
He ruled the Borough when his year came on,
And some forget, and some are glad he 's gone;
For never yet with shilling could he part,
But when it left his hand it struck his heart.
Yet, here will Love its last attentions pay,
And place memorials on these beds of clay.
Large level stones lie flat upon the grave,
And half a century's sun and tempest brave;
But many an honest tear and heartfelt sigh
Have follow'd those who now unnoticed lie;
Of these what numbers rest on every side!
Without one token left by grief or pride;
Their graves soon levell'd to the earth, and then
Will other hillocks rise o'er other men;
Daily the dead on the decay'd are thrust,
And generations follow, "dust to dust."[12]
Yes! there are real Mourners—I have seen
A fair, sad Girl, mild, suffering, and serene;
Attention (through the day) her duties claim'd,
And to be useful as resign'd she aim'd:
Neatly she dress'd, nor vainly seem'd t' expect
Pity for grief, or pardon for neglect;
But when her wearied parents sunk to sleep,
She sought her place to meditate and weep:
Then to her mind was all the past display'd,
That faithful Memory brings to Sorrow's aid;
For then she thought on one regretted Youth,
Her tender trust, and his unquestion'd truth;
In ev'ry place she wander'd, where they 'd been,
And sadly sacred held the parting scene;
Where last for sea he took his leave—that place
With double interest would she nightly trace;
For long the courtship was, and he would say,
Each time he sail'd,—"This once, and then the day:"
Yet prudence tarried, but when last he went,
He drew from pitying love a full consent.
Happy he sail'd, and great the care she took
That he should softly sleep and smartly look;
White was his better linen, and his check
Was made more trim than any on the deck;
And every comfort men at sea can know
Was hers to buy, to make, and to bestow:
For he to Greenland sail'd, and much she told
How he should guard against the climate's cold;
Yet saw not danger; dangers he 'd withstood,
Nor could she trace the fever in his blood:
His messmates smiled at flushings in his cheek,
And he too smiled, but seldom would he speak;
For now he found the danger, felt the pain,
With grievous symptoms he could not explain;
Hope was awaken'd, as for home he sail'd,
But quickly sank, and never more prevail'd.
He call'd his friend, and prefaced with a sigh
A lover's message—"Thomas, I must die:
"Would I could see my Sally, and could rest
"My throbbing temples on her faithful breast,
"And gazing go!—if not, this trifle take,
"And say, till death I wore it for her sake:
"Yes! I must die—blow on, sweet breeze, blow on!
"Give me one look before my life be gone,
"Oh! give me that, and let me not despair,
"One last fond look—and now repeat the prayer."
He had his wish, had more: I will not paint
The Lovers' meeting: she beheld him faint,—
With tender fears, she took a nearer view,
Her terrors doubling as her hopes withdrew;
He tried to smile, and, half succeeding, said,
"Yes! I must die;" and hope for ever fled.
Still long she nursed him: tender thoughts meantime
Were interchanged, and hopes and views sublime:
To her he came to die, and every day
She took some portion of the dread away;
With him she pray'd, to him his Bible read,
Soothed the faint heart, and held the aching head:
She came with smiles the hour of pain to cheer:
Apart she sigh'd; alone, she shed the tear:
Then, as if breaking from a cloud, she gave
Fresh light, and gilt the prospect of the grave.
One day he lighter seem'd, and they forgot
The care, the dread, the anguish of their lot;
They spoke with cheerfulness, and seem'd to think,
Yet said not so—"Perhaps he will not sink:"
A sudden brightness in his look appear'd,
A sudden vigour in his voice was heard,—
She had been reading in the Book of Prayer,
And led him forth, and placed him in his chair;
Lively he seem'd, and spoke of all he knew,
The friendly many, and the favourite few;
Nor one that day did he to mind recall
But she has treasured, and she loves them all:
When in her way she meets them, they appear
Peculiar people—death has made them dear.
He named his Friend, but then his hand she press'd,
And fondly whisper'd, "Thou must go to rest;"
"I go," he said: but as he spoke, she found
His hand more cold, and fluttering was the sound!
Then gazed affrighten'd; but she caught a last,
A dying look of love,—and all was past!
She placed a decent stone his grave above,
Neatly engraved—an offering of her love;
For that she wrought, for that forsook her bed,
Awake alike to duty and the dead;

operation takes place; for those characters which were mixed with the gross particles of vice, by being thrown into the alembic of flattery, are sublimated into the essence of virtue. He who, during the performance of his part upon the stage of the world, was little, if at all, applauded, after the close of the drama is portrayed as the favourite of every virtue under heaven. To save the opulent from oblivion the sculptor unites his labours with the scholar or the poet, whilst the rustic is indebted for his mite of posthumous renown to the carpenter, the painter, or the mason. The structures of fame are, in both cases, built with materials whose duration is short. It may check the sallies of pride to reflect on the mortality of men; but for its complete humiliation let it be remembered that epitaphs and monuments decay."]

12 ["'T is strange, the shortest letter that man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages: to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper—even a rag like this—
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that 's his.

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration;
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,
Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up as a rare deposit. —Byron.]

She would have grieved, had friends presum'd to spare
The least assistance—'t was her proper care.
Here will she come, and on the grave will sit,
Folding her arms, in long abstracted fit;
But if observer pass, will take her round,
And careless seem, for she would not be found;
Then go again, and thus her hour employ,
While visions please her, and while woes destroy.[13]
Forbear, sweet Maid! nor be by Fancy led,
To hold mysterious converse with the dead;
For sure at length thy thoughts, thy spirit's pain,
In this sad conflict will disturb thy brain;
All have their tasks and trials; thine are hard,
But short the time, and glorious the reward;
Thy patient spirit to thy duties give,
Regard the dead, but to the living live.[14]

LETTER III.

And telling me the sov'reign'st thing on earth
Was parmacity for an inward bruise.
SHAKSPEARE.—*Henry IV.* Part I. Act I.

So gentle, yet so brisk, so wond'rous sweet,
So fit to prattle at a lady's feet.—CHURCHILL.

Much are the precious hours of youth mispent
In climbing learning's rugged, steep ascent;
When to the top the bold adventurer 's got,
He reigns vain monarch of a barren spot;
While in the vale of ignorance below,
Folly and vice to rank luxuriance grow;
Honours and wealth pour in on every side,
And proud preferment rolls her golden tide.—CHURCHILL.

THE VICAR—THE CURATE, ETC.

The lately departed Minister of the Borough—His soothing and supplicatory Manners—His cool and timid Affections—No praise due to such negative Virtue—Address to Characters of this kind—The Vicar's Employments—His Talents and moderate Ambition—His Dislike of Innovation—His mild but ineffectual Benevolence—A Summary of his Character.

Mode of paying the Borough-Minister—The Curate has no such Resources—His Learning and Poverty—Erroneous Idea of his Parent—His Feelings as a Husband and Father—the Dutiful Regard of his numerous Family—His Pleasure as a Writer, how interrupted—No Resource in the Press—Vulgar Insult—His Account of a Literary Society, and a Fund for the Relief of indigent Authors, &c.

THE VICAR.

WHERE ends our chancel in a vaulted space,
Sleep the departed Vicars of the place;
Of most, all mention, memory, thought are past—
But take a slight memorial of the last.
To what famed college we our Vicar owe,
To what fair county, let historians show:
Few now remember when the mild young man,
Ruddy and fair, his Sunday-task began;
Few live to speak of that soft soothing look
He cast around, as he prepared his book;
It was a kind of supplicating smile,
But nothing hopeless of applause the while;
And when he finished, his corrected pride
Felt the desert, and yet the praise denied.
Thus he his race began, and to the end
His constant care was, no man to offend;
No haughty virtues stirr'd his peaceful mind;
Nor urged the Priest to leave the Flock behind;
He was his Master's Soldier, but not one
To lead an army of his Martyrs on:
Fear was his ruling passion; yet was Love,
Of timid kind, once known his heart to move;
It led his patient spirit where it paid
Its languid offerings to a listening Maid:
She, with her widow'd Mother, heard him speak,
And sought awhile to find what he would seek:
Smiling he came, he smiled when he withdrew,
And paid the same attention to the two;
Meeting and parting without joy or pain,
He seem'd to come that he might go again.
The wondering girl, no prude, but something nice,
At length was chill'd by his unmelting ice;
She found her tortoise held such sluggish pace,
That she must turn and meet him in the chase:
This not approving, she withdrew, till one
Came who appear'd with livelier hope to run;
Who sought a readier way the heart to move,
Than by faint dalliance of unfixing love.
Accuse me not that I approving paint
Impatient Hope or Love without restraint;
Or think the Passions, a tumultuous throng,
Strong as they are, ungovernably strong:
But is the laurel to the soldier due,
Who, cautious, comes not into danger's view?
What worth has Virtue by Desire untried,
When Nature's self enlists on duty's side?
The married dame in vain assail'd the truth
And guarded bosom of the Hebrew youth;
But with the daughter of the Priest of On[1]
The love was lawful, and the guard was gone;
But Joseph's fame had lessened in our view,
Had he, refusing, fled the maiden too.

[13] ["Longinus somewhere mentions, that it was a question among the critics of his age whether the sublime could be produced by tenderness. If this question had not been already determined, this history would have gone far to bring it to a decision."—GIFFORD.
"Mr. Crabbe has been called a gloomy, which must mean, if any accusation is implied in the term, a false moralist. No doubt, to persons who read his poetry superficially and by snatches and glances, it may seem to give too dark a picture of life; but this, we are convinced, is not the feeling which the study of *the whole* awakens. Here and there he presents us with images of almost perfect beauty, innocence, and happiness; but as such things are seldom seen, and soon disappear in real life, it seems to be Mr. Crabbe's opinion, that so likewise ought they to start out with sudden and transitory smiles, among the darker, the more solemn, or the gloomy pictures of his poetry. It is certain that there are, in his writings, passages of as pure and profound pathos as in any English poet, that he dwells with as holy a delight as any other on the settled countenance of peace, and that, in his wanderings through the mazes of human destiny, his heart burns within him, when his eyes are at times charmed away from the troubles and wickedness of life to its repose and its virtue."—WILSON.]

[14] It has been observed to me, that in the first part of the story, I have represented this young woman as resigned and attentive to her duties; from which it would appear, that the concluding advice is unnecessary: but if the reader will construe the expression 'to the living live,' into the sense—live entirely for them, attend to duties only which are real, and not those imposed by the imagination,—I shall have no reason to alter the line which terminates the story.

[1] ["And Pharaoh gave Joseph to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest in On."—*Gen.* xli. 45.]

Yet our good priest to Joseph's praise aspired,
As once rejecting what his heart desired;
"I am escaped," he said, when none pursued;
When none attack'd him, "I am unsubdued;"
"Oh pleasing pangs of love!" he sang again,
Cold to the joy, and stranger to the pain.
E'en in his age would he address the young,
"I too have felt these fires, and they are strong;"
But from the time he left his favourite maid,
To ancient females his devoirs were paid:
And still they miss him after Morning-prayer;
Nor yet successor fills the Vicar's chair,
Where kindred spirits in his praise agree,
A happy few, as mild and cool as he;
The easy followers in the female train,
Led without love, and captives without chain.
Ye Lilies male! think (as your tea you sip,
While the town small-talk flows from lip to lip;
Intrigues half-gather'd, conversation-scraps,
Kitchen cabals, and nursery-mishaps,)
If the vast world may not some scene produce,
Some state where your small talents might have use;
Within seraglios you might harmless move,
'Mid ranks of beauty, and in haunts of love;
There from too daring man the treasures guard,
An easy duty, and its own reward;
Nature's soft substitutes, you there might save
From crime the tyrant, and from wrong the slave.
But let applause be dealt in all we may,
Our Priest was cheerful, and in season gay;
His frequent visits seldom fail'd to please;
Easy himself, he sought his neighbour's ease:
To a small garden with delight he came,
And gave successive flowers a summer's fame;
These he presented, with a grace his own,
To his fair friends, and made their beauties known,
Not without moral compliment; how they
"Like flowers were sweet, and must like flowers decay."
Simple he was, and loved the simple truth,
Yet had some useful cunning from his youth;
A cunning never to dishonour lent,
And rather for defence than conquest meant;
'T was fear of power, with some desire to rise,
But not enough to make him enemies;
He ever aim'd to please; and to offend
Was ever cautious; for he sought a friend;
Yet for the friendship never much would pay,
Content to bow, be silent, and obey,
And by a soothing suff'rance find his way.
Fiddling and fishing were his arts: at times
He alter'd sermons, and he aim'd at rhymes;
And his fair friends, not yet intent on cards,
Oft he amused with riddles and charades.

Mild were his doctrines, and not one discourse
But gain'd in softness what it lost in force:
Kind his opinions; he would not receive
An ill report, nor evil act believe;
"If true, 't was wrong; but blemish great or small
"Have all mankind; yea, sinners are we all."
If ever fretful thought disturb'd his breast,
If aught of gloom that cheerful mind oppress'd,
It sprang from innovation; it was then
He spake of mischief made by restless men:
Not by new doctrines: never in his life
Would he attend to controversial strife;
For sects he cared not; "They are not of us,
"Nor need we, brethren, their concerns discuss;
"But 't is the change, the schism at home I feel;
"Ills few perceive, and none have skill to heal:
"Not at the altar our young brethren read
"(Facing their flock) the decalogue and creed;
"But at their duty, in their desks they stand,
"With naked surplice, lacking hood and band:
"Churches are now of holy song bereft,
"And half our ancient customs changed or left;
"Few sprigs of ivy are at Christmas seen,
"Nor crimson berry tips the holly's green;[2]
"Mistaken choirs refuse the solemn strain
"Of ancient Sternhold, which from ours amain
"Comes flying forth from aisle to aisle about,[3]
"Sweet links of harmony and long drawn out."[4]
These were to him essentials; all things new
He deemed superfluous, useless, or untrue:
To all beside indifferent, easy, cold,
Here the fire kindled, and the woe was told.
Habit with him was all the test of truth:
"It must be right: I've done it from my youth."
Questions he answer'd in as brief a way:
"It must be wrong—it was of yesterday."
Though mild benevolence our Priest possess'd,
'T was but by wishes or by words express'd.
Circles in water, as they wider flow,
The less conspicuous in their progress grow,
And when at last they touch upon the shore,
Distinction ceases, and they 're view'd no more.
His love, like that last circle, all embraced,
But with effect that never could be traced.[5]
Now rests our Vicar. They who knew him best,
Proclaim his life t' have been entirely rest;
Free from all evils which disturb his mind,
Whom studies vex and controversies blind.
The rich approved,—of them in awe he stood;
The poor admired,—they all believed him good;
The old and serious of his habits spoke;
The frank and youthful loved his pleasant joke;
Mothers approved a safe contented guest,
And daughters one who back'd each small request;

[2] ["Against the feast of Christmas," says Stow, "every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holme, ivy, bayes, berries, and whatever the season of the year afforded to be green." Gay, in his Trivia, thus describes the custom:—

"When rosemary and bays, the poet's crown,
Are bawl'd in frequent cries through all the town,
Then judge the festival of Christmas near,
Christmas! the joyous period of the year;
Now with bright holly all your temples strow,
With laurel green and sacred mistletoe."]

[3] ["On cherub and on cherubim Full royally he rode,
And on the wings of mighty winds Came flying all abroad."]

[4] ["In notes with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out."—MILTON.]

[5] ["Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace;
His country next; and next all human race."—POPE.]

In him his flock found nothing to condemn;
Him sectaries liked,—he never troubled them.
No trifles fail'd his yielding mind to please,
And all his passions sunk in early ease;
Nor one so old has left this world of sin,
More like the being that he enter'd in.[6]

THE CURATE.

Ask you what lands our Pastor tithes?—Alas!
But few our acres, and but short our grass:
In some fat pastures of the rich, indeed,
May roll the single cow or favourite steed;
Who, stable-fed, is here for pleasure seen,
His sleek sides bathing in the dewy green;
But these, our hilly heath and common wide
Yield a slight portion for the parish-guide;
No crops luxuriant in our borders stand,
For here we plough the ocean, not the land;
Still reason wills that we our Pastor pay,
And custom does it on a certain day:
Much is the duty, small the legal due,
And this with grateful minds we keep in view;
Each makes his off'ring, some by habit led,
Some by the thought that all men must be fed;
Duty and love, and piety and pride,
Have each their force, and for the Priest provide.
Not thus our Curate, one whom all believe
Pious and just, and for whose fate they grieve;
All see him poor, but e'en the vulgar know
He merits love, and their respect bestow.
A man so learn'd you shall but seldom see,
Nor one so honour'd, so aggrieved as he;—
Not grieved by years alone; though his appear
Dark and more dark; severer on severe:
Not in his need,—and yet we all must grant
How painful 'tis for feeling Age to want:
Nor in his body's sufferings; yet we know
Where Time has ploughed, there Misery loves to sow;
But in the wearied mind, that all in vain
Wars with distress, and struggles with its pain.
His Father saw his powers—"I'll give," quoth he,
"My first-born learning; 't will a portion be:"
Unhappy gift! a portion for a son!
But all he had:—he learn'd, and was undone!
Better, apprenticed to an humble trade,
Had he the cassock for the priesthood made,
Or thrown the shuttle, or the saddle shaped,
And all these pangs of feeling souls escaped.[7]
He once had hope—Hope, ardent, lively, light;
His feelings pleasant, and his prospects bright:
Eager of fame, he read, he thought, he wrote,
Weigh'd the Greek page, and added note on note.
At morn, at evening, at his work was he,
And dream'd what his Euripides would be.
Then care began:—he loved, he woo'd, he wed;
Hope cheer'd him still, and Hymen bless'd his bed—
A curate's bed! then came the woful years;
The husband's terrors, and the father's tears;
A wife grown feeble, mourning, pining, vex'd
With wants and woes—by daily cares perplex'd;
No more a help, a smiling, soothing aid,
But boding, drooping, sickly, and afraid.
A kind physician, and without a fee,
Gave his opinion—"Send her to the sea."
"Alas!" the good man answer'd, "can I send
"A friendless woman? Can I find a friend?
"No; I must with her, in her need, repair
"To that new place; the poor lie everywhere;—
"Some priest will pay me for my pious pains:"—
He said, he came, and here he yet remains.
Behold his dwelling! this poor hut he hires,
Where he from view, though not from want, retires;
Where four fair daughters, and five sorrowing sons,
Partake his sufferings, and dismiss his duns;
All join their efforts, and in patience learn
To want the comforts they aspire to earn;
For the sick mother something they 'd obtain,
To soothe her grief and mitigate her pain;
For the sad father something they 'd procure
To ease the burden they themselves endure.
Virtues like these at once delight and press
On the fond father with a proud distress;
On all around he looks with care and love,
Grieved to behold, but happy to approve.
Then from his care, his love, his grief he steals,
And by himself an Author's pleasure feels:
Each line detains him; he omits not one,
And all the sorrows of his state are gone.[8]—
Alas! even then, in that delicious hour,
He feels his fortune, and laments its power.
Some Tradesman's bill his wandering eyes engage,
Some scrawl for payment thrust 'twixt page and page;
Some bold, loud rapping at his humble door,
Some surly message he has heard before,
Awake, alarm, and tell him he is poor.
An angry Dealer, vulgar, rich, and proud,
Thinks of his bill, and, passing, raps aloud;
The elder daughter meekly makes him way—
"I want my money, and I cannot stay:
"My mill is stopp'd; what, Miss! I cannot grind;
"Go tell your father he must raise the wind:"
Still trembling, troubled, the dejected maid
Says, "Sir! my father!"—and then stops afraid:

6 ["The Vicar is an admirable sketch of what must be very difficult to draw; a good, easy man, with no character at all. His little, humble vanity; his constant care to offend no one; his mawkish and feeble gallantry, indolent good-nature, and love of gossiping and trifling—are all very exactly and very pleasingly delineated."—JEFFREY.]

7 [Original edition:—

Oh! had he learn'd to make the wig he wears,
To throw the shuttle, or command the sheers,
Or the strong boar-skin for the saddle shaped,
What pangs, what terrors, had the Man escaped!]

8 ["There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
Th' expedients and inventions, multiform,
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win,
T' arrest the fleeting images that fill
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast—
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address from themes of sad import,
That, lost in his own musings, happy man!
He feels th' anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire."—COWPER.]

E'en his hard heart is soften'd, and he hears
Her voice with pity; she respects her tears;
His stubborn features half admit a smile,
And his tone softens—"Well! I'll wait awhile."
Pity! a man so good, so mild, so meek,
At such an age, should have his bread to seek;
And all those rude and fierce attacks to dread,
That are more harrowing than the want of bread;
Ah! who shall whisper to that misery peace!
And say that want and insolence shall cease?
"But why not publish?"—those who know too well,
Dealers in Greek, are fearful 't will not sell;
Then he himself is timid, troubled, slow,
Nor likes his labours nor his griefs to show;
The hope of fame may in his heart have place,
But he has dread and horror of disgrace;
Nor has he that confiding, easy way,
That might his learning and himself display;
But to his work he from the world retreats,
And frets and glories o'er the favourite sheets.
But see! the Man himself; and sure I trace
Signs of new joy exulting in that face
O'er care that sleeps—we err, or we discern
Life in thy looks—the reason may we learn?
"Yes," he replied, "I'm happy, I confess,
" To learn that some are pleased with happiness
" Which others feel—there are who now combine
" The worthiest natures in the best design,
" To aid the letter'd poor, and soothe such ills as mine.
" We who more keenly feel the world's contempt,
" And from its miseries are the least exempt;
" Now Hope shall whisper to the wounded breast,
" And Grief, in soothing expectation, rest.
"Yes, I am taught that men who think, who feel,
" Unite the pains of thoughtful men to heal;
" Not with disdainful pride, whose bounties make
" The needy curse the benefits they take;
" Not with the idle vanity that knows
" Only a selfish joy when it bestows;
" Not with o'erbearing wealth, that, in disdain,
" Hurls the superfluous bliss at groaning pain;
" But these are men who yield such blest relief,
" That with the grievance they destroy the grief;
" Their timely aid the needy sufferers find,
" Their generous manner soothes the suffering mind;
" There is a gracious bounty, form'd to raise
" Him whom it aids; their charity is praise;
" A common bounty may relieve distress,
" But whom the vulgar succour they oppress;
" This though a favour is an honour too,
" Though Mercy's duty, yet 't is Merit's due;
" When our relief from such resources rise,
" All painful sense of obligation dies;
" And grateful feelings in the bosom wake,
" For 't is their offerings, not their alms we take.
" Long may these founts of Charity remain,
" And never shrink, but to be fill'd again;
" True! to the Author they are now confined,
" To him who gave the treasure of his mind,
" His time, his health,—and thankless found mankind:
" But there is hope that from these founts may flow
" A side-way stream, and equal good bestow;
" Good that my reach us, whom the day's distress
" Keeps from the fame and perils of the Press;
" Whom Study beckons from the Ills of Life,
" And they from Study; melancholy strife!
" Who then can say, but bounty now so free,
" And so diffused, may find its way to me?
" Yes! I may see my decent table yet
" Cheer'd with the meal that adds not to my debt;
" May talk of those to whom so much we owe,
" And guess their names whom yet we may not know;
" Blest, we shall say, are those who thus can give,
" And next who thus upon the bounty live;
" Then shall I close with thanks my humble meal,
" And feel so well—Oh, God! how shall I feel!" [9]

LETTER IV.

INTRODUCTION.

I AM now arrived at that part of my work which I may expect will bring upon me some animadversion. Religion is a subject deeply interesting to the minds of many, and when these minds are weak, they are often led by a warmth of feeling into the violence of causeless resentment: I am therefore anxious that my purpose shall be understood; and I wish to point out what things they are which an author may hold up to ridicule and be blameless. In referring to the two principal divisions of enthusiastical teachers, I have denominated them, as I conceive they are generally called, *Calvinistic* and *Arminian* Methodists. The *Arminians*, though divided and perhaps subdivided, are still, when particular accuracy is not intended, considered as one body, having had, for many years, one head, who is yet held in high respect by the varying members of the present day: but the Calvinistic societies are to be looked upon rather as separate and independent congregations; and it is to one of these (unconnected, as is supposed, with any other)

[9] The wants and mortifications of a poor clergyman are the subjects of one portion of this Letter; and he being represented as a stranger in the Borough, it may be necessary to make some apology for his appearance in the poem. Previous to a late meeting of a literary society, whose benevolent purpose is well known to the public, I was induced by a friend to compose a few verses, in which, with the general commendation of the design, should be introduced a hint that the bounty might be farther extended; these verses, a gentleman did me the honour to recite at the meeting, and they were printed as an extract from the poem, to which, in fact, they may be called an appendage.

[In the beginning of 1809, Dr. Cartwright having expressed a wish that Mr. Crabbe would prepare some verses to be repeated at the ensuing meeting of the Literary Fund, and a portion of "The Borough," then in progress, being judged suitable for the occasion, it was accordingly forwarded to the Society, and recited at the anniversary, in April, by Matthew Browne, Esq. In the May following, the council and committee resolved, that a learned and officiating clergyman in distress, or an officiating clergyman, reduced and rendered incapable of duty, by age or infirmity, should be considered as a claimant on the fund.]

I more particularly allude. But while I am making use of this division, I must entreat that I may not be considered as one who takes upon him to censure the religious opinions of any society or individual: the reader will find that the spirit of the enthusiast, and not his opinions, his manners, and not his creed, have engaged my attention. I have nothing to observe of the Calvinist and Arminian, considered as such; but my remarks are pointed at the enthusiast and the bigot, at their folly and their craft.

To those readers who have seen the journals of the first Methodists, or the extracts quoted from them by their opposers[1] in the early times of this spiritual influenza, are sufficiently known all their leading notions and peculiarities; so that I have no need to enter into such unpleasant inquiries in this place. I have only to observe, that their tenets remain the same, and have still the former effect on the minds of the converted: there is yet that imagined contention with the powers of darkness that is at once so lamentable and so ludicrous: there is the same offensive familiarity with the Deity, with a full trust and confidence both in the immediate efficacy of their miserably delivered supplications, and in the reality of numberless small miracles wrought at their request and for their convenience; there still exists that delusion, by which some of the most common diseases of the body are regarded as proofs of the malignity of Satan contending for dominion over the soul; and there still remains the same wretched jargon, composed of scriptural language, debased by vulgar expressions, which has a kind of mystic influence on the minds of the ignorant. It will be recollected that it is the abuse of those scriptural terms which I conceive to be improper: they are doubtless most significant and efficacious when used with propriety; but it is painful to the mind of a soberly devout person, when he hears every rise and fall of the animal spirits, every whim and notion of enthusiastic ignorance, expressed in the venerable language of the Apostles and Evangelists.

The success of these people is great, but not surprising: as the powers they claim are given, and come not of education, many may, and therefore do, fancy they are endowed with them: so that they who do not venture to become preachers, yet exert the minor gifts, and gain reputation for the faculty of prayer, as soon as they can address the Creator in daring flights of unpremeditated absurdity. The less indigent gain the praise of hospitality, and the more harmonious become distinguished in their choirs; curiosity is kept alive by succession of ministers, and self-love is flattered by the consideration that they are the persons at whom the world wonders; add to this, that, in many of them pride is gratified by their consequence as new members of a sect whom their conversion pleases, and by the liberty, which as seceders they take of speaking contemptuously of the Church and ministers whom they have relinquished.

Of those denominated *Calvinistic Methodists*, I had principally one sect in view, or, to adopt the term of its founder, *a church*. This *church* consists of several congregations in town and country, unknown perhaps in many parts of the kingdom, but, where known, the cause of much curiosity and some amusement. To such of my readers as may judge an enthusiastic teacher and his peculiarities to be unworthy any serious attention, I would observe, that there is something unusually daring in the boast of this man, who claims the authority of a messenger sent from God, and declares without hesitation that his call was immediate; that he is assisted by the sensible influence of the Spirit, and that miracles are perpetually wrought in his favour and for his convenience.

As it was and continues to be my desire to give proof that I had advanced nothing respecting this extraordinary person, his operations or assertions, which might not be readily justified by quotations from his own writings, I had collected several of these, and disposed them under certain heads; but I found that by this means a very disproportioned share of attention must be given to the subject, and, after some consideration, I have determined to relinquish the design; and should any have curiosity to search whether my representation of the temper and disposition, the spirit and manners, the knowledge and capacity, of a very popular teacher be correct, he is referred to about fourscore pamphlets,[2] whose titles will be found on the covers of the late editions of the *Bank of Faith*, itself a

[1] Methodists and Papists compared; Treatise on Grace by Bishop Warburton, &c.

[2] ["The Works of the Rev. William Huntington, S. S., Minister of the Gospel, at Providence Chapel, Gray's Inn Lane," were published in 1820, in *twenty* volumes octavo; the most extraordinary part of their contents being the tract entitled "*God the Guardian of the Poor and the Bank of Faith; or, a Display of the Providences of God, which have, at sundry times, attended the Author.*" "This," says Southey, "is a production equally singular and curious. There is nothing like it in the whole bibliotheca of knavery and fanaticism. One day, when he had nothing but bread in the house, he was moved by the Spirit to take a bye-path, where he had never gone before; but the reason was, that a stoat was to kill a fine large rabbit, just in time for him to secure his prey. At one time, when there was no tea in the house, and they had neither money nor credit, his wife bade the nurse set the kettle on in faith, and before it boiled, a stranger brought a present of tea to the door. At another time, a friend, without solicitation, gives him half a guinea when he was penniless; and, lest he should have any difficulty in obtaining change for it, when he crossed Kingston Bridge, he cast his eyes on the ground, and finds a penny to pay the toll. He wants a new parsonic livery; 'wherefore,' says he, 'in humble prayer I told my most blessed Lord and master that my year was out, and my apparel bad; that I had nowhere to go for these things but to him; and as he had promised to give his servants food and raiment, I hoped he would fulfil his promise to me, though one of the worst of them.' So he called upon a certain person, and the raggedness of his apparel led to a conversation which ended in the offer of a new suit, and a great-coat to boot. Being now in much request, and having 'many doors open to him for preaching the gospel very wide apart,' he began to want a horse, then to wish, and lastly to pray for one. 'I used my prayers,' he says, 'as gunners use their swivels, turning them every way as the various cases required;' before the day was over, he was presented with a horse. 'I told God,' says he, 'that I had more work for my faith now than heretofore; for the horse would cost half as much to keep him as my whole family. In answer to which, this scripture came to my mind with power and comfort, 'Dwell in the land and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed.' This was a bank note put into the hand of my faith, which, when I got poor, I pleaded before God, and he answered it. Having now had my horse for some time, and riding a great deal every week, I soon wore my breeches out, so that they were not fit to ride in. I hope the reader will

wonderful performance, which (according to the turn of mind in the reader) will either highly excite or totally extinguish curiosity. In these works will be abundantly seen, abuse and contempt of the Church of England and its ministers; vengeance and virulent denunciation against all offenders; scorn for morality and heathen virtue, with that kind of learning which the author possesses, and his peculiar style of composition. A few of the titles placed below will give some information to the reader respecting the merit and design of those performances.[3]

As many of the preacher's subjects are controverted and nice questions in divinity, he has sometimes allowed himself relaxation from the severity of study, and favoured his admirers with the effects of an humbler kind of inspiration, viz. that of the Muse. It must be confessed that these flights of fancy are very humble, and have nothing of that daring and mysterious nature which the prose of the author leads us to expect.[4] *The Dimensions of eternal* LOVE is a title of one of his more learned productions, with which might have been expected (as a fit companion) *The Bounds of infinite Grace;* but no such work appears, and possibly the author considered one attempt of this kind was sufficient to prove the extent and direction of his abilities.

Of the whole of this mass of inquiry and decision, of denunciation and instruction (could we suppose it read by intelligent persons), different opinions would probably be formed: the more indignant and severe would condemn the whole as the produce of craft and hypocrisy, while the more lenient would allow that such things might originate in the wandering imagination of a dreaming enthusiast.

None of my readers will, I trust, do me so much injustice as to suppose I have here any other motive than a vindication of what I have advanced in the verses which describe this kind of character, or that I had there any other purpose than to express (what I conceive to be) justifiable indignation against the assurance, the malignity, and (what is of more importance) the pernicious influence of such sentiments on the minds of the simple and ignorant, who, if they give credit to his relations, must be no more than tools and instruments under the control and management of one *called to be their Apostle.*

Nothing would be more easy for me, as I have observed, than to bring forward quotations such as would justify all I have advanced; but even had I room, I cannot tell whether there be not something degrading in such kind of attack: the reader might smile at those miraculous accounts, but he would consider them and the language of the author as beneath his further attention: I therefore once more refer him to those pamphlets, which will afford matter for pity and for contempt, by which some would be amused and others astonished—not without sorrow, when they reflect that thousands look up to the writer as a man literally inspired, to whose wants they administer with their substance, and to whose guidance they prostrate their spirit and understanding.[5]

excuse my mentioning the word *breeches*, which I should have avoided, had not this passage of scripture obtruded into my mind, just as I had resolved in my own thoughts not to mention this kind providence of God: 'And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs shall they reach; and they shall be upon Aaron and his *sons*,' &c. Exod. xxviii. 42. By which and three others, namely, Ezek. xliv. 18, Lev. vi. 10, and Lev. xvi. 4, I saw that it was no crime to mention the word breeches, nor the way in which God sent them to me; Aaron and his sons being clothed entirely by Providence; and as God himself condescended to give orders what they should be made of, and how they should be cut; and I believe the same God ordered mine. I often made very free in my prayers with my invaluable master for this favour; but he still kept me so amazingly poor, that I could not get them at any rate. At last I was determined to go to a friend of mine at Kingston, who is of that branch of business, to bespeak a pair, and to get him to trust me until my master sent me money to pay him. I was that day going to London, fully determined to bespeak them, as I rode through the town. However, when I passed the shop I forgot it; but when I came to London, I called on Mr. Croucher, a shoemaker, in Shepherd's Market, who told me a parcel was left there for me, but what it was he knew not. I opened it, and behold there was a pair of leather breeches, with a note in them! the substance of which was as follows: 'Sir, I have sent you a pair of breeches, and hope they will fit.' I wrote an answer to the note to this effect: 'I received your present, and thank you for it. I was going to order a pair of leather breeches to be made, because I did not know that my Master had bespoke them of you. They fit very well, which fully convinces me that the same God who moved thy heart to give, guided thy hand to cut; because he perfectly knows my size, having clothed me in a miraculous way for near five years!' The plan of purveying for himself by prayer, with the help of hints in the proper place and season, answered so well, that he soon obtained, by the same means, a new bed, a rug, a pair of new blankets, doe-skin gloves, and a horseman's coat. His wife also tried her fortune, and with good success; gowns came as they were wanted, hampers of bacon and cheese, now and then a large ham, and now and then a guinea; all which things he calls precious answers to prayer."—*Quarterly Review*, vol. xxiv.]

[3] Barbar, in two parts; Bond-Child; Cry of Little Faith; Satan's Lawsuit; Forty Stripes for Satan; Myrrh and Odour of Saints; the Naked Bow of God; Rule and Riddle; Way and Fare for Wayfaring Men; Utility of the Books and Excellency of the Parchments; Correspondence between *Nectua, Aurita*, (the words so separated,) and *Philomela*, &c.

[4] [One of his poetical productions is described in the title-page as

"A clownish poem on the Shunamite,
A sinner call'd to be the Lord's delight;
By the despised William Huntington,
Both known and trusted now in Paddington."]

[5] ["When, in October, 1805, Mr. Crabbe resumed the charge of his own parish of Muston, he found some changes to vex him, and not the less because he had too much reason to suspect that his long absence from his incumbency had been, partly at least, the cause of them. His cure had been served by respectable and diligent clergymen, but they had been often changed, and some of them had never resided within the parish; and he felt that the binding influence of a settled and permanent minister had not been withdrawn for twelve years with impunity. A Wesleyan missionary had formed a thriving establishment in Muston, and the congregations at the parish church were no longer such as they had been of old. This much annoyed him; and the warmth with which he began to preach against dissent only irritated himself and others, without bringing back disciples to the fold. But the progress of the Wesleyans, of all sects the least unfriendly in feeling, as well as the least dissimilar in tenets, to the established church, was, after all, a slight vexation compared to what he underwent from witnessing the much more limited success of a disciple of Huntington in spreading in the same neighbourhood the pernicious fanaticism of his half-crazy master. The *social* and *moral* effects of that new mission were well calculated to excite not only regret, but indignation; and, among other distressing incidents, was the de-

LETTER IV.

. . . . . But cast your eyes again
And view those errors which new sects maintain,
Or which of old disturb'd the Church's peaceful reign;
And we can point each period of the time
When they began and who begat the crime;
Can calculate how long th' eclipse endured;
Who interposed; what digits were obscured;
Of all which are already pass'd away,
We knew the rise, the progress, and decay.
DRYDEN.—*Hind and Panther.*

Oh, said the Hind, how many sons have you
Who call you mother, whom you never knew!
But most of them who that relation plead
Are such ungracious youths as wish you dead;
They gape at rich revenues which you hold,
And fain would nibble at your grandame gold.
Hind and Panther.

SECTS AND PROFESSIONS IN RELIGION.

Sects and Professions in Religion are numerous and successive—General Effect of false Zeal—Deists—Fanatical Idea of Church Reformers—The Church of Rome—Baptists—Swedenborgians—Universalists—Jews.

Methodists of two Kinds; Calvinistic and Arminian.

The Preaching of a Calvinistic Enthusiast—His Contempt of Learning—Dislike to sound Morality: why—His Idea of Conversion—His Success and Pretensions to Humility.

The Arminian Teacher of the older Flock—Their Notions of the Operations and Power of Satan—Description of his Devices—Their Opinion of regular Ministers—Comparison of these with the Preacher himself—A Rebuke to his Hearers; introduces a Description of the powerful Effects of the Word in the early and awakening Days of Methodism.

"SECTS in Religion?"—Yes, of every race
We nurse some portion in our favour'd place;
Not one warm preacher of one growing sect
Can say our Borough treats him with neglect;
Frequent as fashions they with us appear,
And you might ask, "how think we for the year?"
They come to us as riders in a trade,[6]
And with much art exhibit and persuade.
Minds are for Sects of various kinds decreed,
As diff'rent soils are formed for diff'rent seed;
Some when converted sigh in sore amaze,
And some are wrapt in joy's ecstatic blaze;
Others again will change to each extreme,
They know not why—as hurried in a dream;
Unstable, they, like water, take all forms,
Are quick and stagnant; have their calms, and storms;
High on the hills, they in the sunbeams glow,
Then muddily they move debased and slow;
Or cold and frozen rest, and neither rise nor flow.
Yet none the cool and prudent Teacher prize.
On him they dote who wakes their ecstasies;
With passions ready primed such guide they meet,
And warm and kindle with th' imparted heat;
'T is he who wakes the nameless strong desire,
The melting rapture and the glowing fire;
'T is he who pierces deep the tortured breast,
And stirs the terrors never more to rest.
Opposed to these we have a prouder kind,
Rash without heat, and without raptures blind;
These our *Glad Tidings* unconcern'd peruse,
Search without awe, and without fear refuse;
The truths, the blessings found in Sacred Writ,
Call forth their spleen, and exercise their wit;
Respect from these nor saints nor martyrs gain,
The zeal they scorn, and they deride the pain:
And take their transient, cool, contemptuous view,
Of that which must be tried, and doubtless *may be true.*
Friends of our Faith we have, whom doubts like these,
And keen remarks, and bold objections please;
They grant such doubts have weaker minds oppress'd,
Till sound conviction gave the troubled rest.

parture from his own household of two servants, a woman and a man, one of whom had been employed by him for twenty years. The man, a conceited ploughman, set up for a Huntingtonian preacher himself; and the woman, whose moral character had been sadly deteriorated since her adoption of the new lights, was at last obliged to be dismissed, in consequence of intolerable insolence."—*Ante*, p. 50.

On the passages in Letter IV., treating of Methodism, the 'Eclectic Review' said:—"Mr. Crabbe's representation of the Methodists in general, as addressing the Creator with daring flights of unpremeditated absurdity, if intended to apply indiscriminately, can only be excused by supposing the writer ignorant and rash, instead of malicious and unprincipled. There is too much truth in his strictures on the author of the 'Bank of Faith.' The Arminian Methodists afford him as much amusement as the Calvinists. He makes no scruple of turning their internal conflicts, as well as the tenour and influence of their leader's preaching, into general and unqualified ridicule. The 'truth divine' is not secured from his satire by the supreme authority of that 'Teacher' who thought proper to illustrate the spiritual change by this striking figure; and the evil spirit, solemnly described by an apostle as 'a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour,' is ludicrously exhibited in Mr. Crabbe's verse as a dragon of romance,

> 'Whom sainted knights attack in sinners' cause,
> And force the wounded victim from his paws.'"

With reference to the above strictures, the Poet added the following note in his third edition of "The Borough:"—"An objection is made to the levity with which the subject of religion is said to be treated in this letter. This the author cannot admit: it is not religion, but what hurts religion, what is injurious to all true devotion, and at enmity with all sober sense, which is thus unceremoniously treated: false and bigoted zeal; weak and obstinate enthusiasm; ignorance that presumes to teach, and intolerant pride that boasts of humility; these alone are objects of his attack. An author has not the less reverence for religion because, in warring with fanaticism, he uses the only weapons by which it is said to be vulnerable; and he doubts not but he shall be excused (nay, approved, so far as respects his intention) by the public in general, and more especially by that part of it (and that by no means a small part), who think the persons so described, while they are themselves—

> 'Safe from the Bar, the Pulpit, and the Throne,'

are the very people from whom, did their power correspond with their wishes, neither the Pulpit nor the Throne (if the Bar should escape) would remain in safety."]

[6] ["The fact is curious in the history of trade, and little known, that the practice of travelling about the country to solicit orders for goods, began among the Quakers, as an incidental consequence of the life led by their errant-preachers: Francis Bugg, of unsavoury name, tells us this: 'We no sooner had our liberty,' he says, 'but all our London preachers spread themselves, like locusts, all over England and Wales. Some went east, some west, yea, north and south; and, being generally tradesmen, we not only got our quarters free, our horses free and well maintained in our travels; a silver watch here, a beaver there, a piece of haircamblet, and sometimes other things; but, moreover, we got

"But still," they cry, "let none their censures spare,
"They but confirm the glorious hopes we share;
"From doubt, disdain, derision, scorn, and lies,
"With five-fold triumph sacred Truth shall rise."
Yes! I allow, so Truth shall stand at last,
And gain fresh glory by the conflict past:—
As Solway-Moss (a barren mass and cold,
Death to the seed, and poison to the fold),
The smiling plain and fertile vale o'erlaid,
Choked the green sod, and kill'd the springing blade;
That, changed by culture, may in time be seen
Enrich'd by golden grain and pasture green;
And these fair acres rented and enjoy'd
May those excel by Solway-Moss destroy'd.[7]
Still must have mourn'd the tenant of the day,
For hopes destroy'd, and harvests swept away;
To him the gain of future years unknown,
The instant grief and suffering were his own:
So must I grieve for many a wounded heart,
Chill'd by those doubts which bolder minds impart:
Truth in the end shall shine divinely clear,
But sad the darkness till those times appear;
Contests for truth, as wars for freedom, yield
Glory and joy to those who gain the field:
But still the Christian must in pity sigh
For all who suffer, and uncertain die.
Here are, who all the Church maintains approve,
But yet the Church herself they will not love;
In angry speech, they blame the carnal tie,
Which pure Religion lost her spirit by;
What time from prisons, flames, and tortures led,
She slumber'd careless in a royal bed;
To make, they add, the Church's glory shine,
Should Diocletian reign, not Constantine.
"In pomp," they cry, "is England's Church array'd,
"Her cool Reformers wrought like men afraid;
"We would have pull'd her gorgeous temples down,
"And spurn'd her mitre, and defiled her gown:
"We would have trodden low both bench and stall,
"Nor left a tithe remaining, great or small."
Let us be serious—Should such trials come,
Are they themselves prepared for martyrdom?
It seems to us that our reformers knew
Th' important work they undertook to do;
An equal priesthood they were loth to try,
Lest zeal and care should with ambition die;
To them it seem'd that, take the tenth away,
Yet priests must eat, and you must feed or pay:
Would they indeed, who hold such pay in scorn,
Put on the muzzle when they tread the corn?
Would they all, gratis, watch and tend the fold,
Nor take one fleece to keep them from the cold?
Men are not equal, and 't is meet and right
That robes and titles our respect excite;
Order requires it; 't is by vulgar pride
That such regard is censured and denied;
Or by that false enthusiastic zeal,
That thinks the Spirit will the priest reveal,
And show to all men, by their powerful speech,
Who are appointed and inspired to teach:
Alas! could we the dangerous rule believe,
Whom for their teacher should the crowd receive?
Since all the varying kinds demand respect,
All press you on to join their chosen sect,
Although but in this single point agreed,
"Desert your churches and adopt our creed."
We know full well how much our forms offend
The burthen'd Papist and the simple Friend;
Him, who new robes for every service takes,
And who in drab and beaver sighs and shakes;
He on the priest, whom hood and band adorn,
Looks with the sleepy eye of silent scorn;
But him I would not for my friend and guide,
Who views such things with spleen, or wears with pride.
See next our several Sects,—but first behold
The Church of Rome, who here is poor and old:
Use not triumphant rail'ry, or, at least,
Let not thy mother be a whore and beast;
Great was her pride indeed in ancient times,
Yet shall we think of nothing but her crimes?
Exalted high above all earthly things,
She placed her foot upon the neck of kings;
But some have deeply since avenged the crown,
And thrown her glory and her honours down;
Nor neck nor ear can she of kings command,
Nor place a foot upon her own fair land.
Among her sons, with us a quiet few,
Obscure themselves, her ancient state review,

into great trades; and, by spreading ourselves in the country, into great acquaintance, and thereby received orders of the best of the country tradesmen for parcels, whilst the Protestant tradesmen in London, who had not this advantage, stood still, and in their shops had little to do, whilst we filled our coffers. Witness Thomas Greene, whose wife would scarce suffer him at home, she being willing (according to the proverb), to make hay whilst the sun shines. Thomas died worth, as is said, six or eight thousand pounds, who was a poor mason when he set up for a preaching Quaker.'"—SOUTHEY.]

[7] ["Solway-Moss is a flat area, about seven miles in circumference. The substance of it is a gross fluid, composed of mud and the putrid fibres of heath, diluted by internal springs, which arise in every part. The surface is a dry crust, covered with moss and rushes, offering a fair appearance over an unsound bottom. On the south, the Moss is bounded by a cultivated plain, which declines gently through the space of a mile to the river Esk. This plain is lower than the moss, being separated from it by a breastwork, formed by digging peat, which makes an irregular, though perpendicular, line of low black boundary. On the 13th of November, 1771, in a dark tempestuous night, the inhabitants of the plain were alarmed with a dreadful crash; many of them were then in the fields watching their cattle, lest the Esk, which was then rising violently in the storm, should carry them off. In the meantime, the enormous mass of fluid substance, which had burst from the moss, moved on, spreading itself more and more as it got possession of the plain. Some of the inhabitants, through the terror of the night, could plainly discover it advancing like a moving hill. This was, in fact, the case; for the gush of mud carried before it, through the first two or three hundred yards of its course, a part of the breastwork; which, though low, was yet several feet in perpendicular height; but it soon deposited this solid mass, and became a heavy fluid. One house after another it spread round, filled, and crushed into ruins, just giving time to the terrified inhabitants to escape. Scarcely any thing was saved except their lives; nothing of their furniture, few of their cattle. This dreadful inundation, though the first shock of it was most tremendous, continued still spreading for many weeks, till it covered the whole plain, an area of five hundred acres, and like molten lead poured into a mould, filled all the hollows of it, lying in some parts thirty or forty feet deep, reducing the whole to one level surface."—GILPIN.]

And fond and melancholy glances cast
On power insulted, and on triumph past:
They look, they can but look, with many a sigh,
On sacred buildings doom'd in dust to lie;
"On seats," they tell, "where priests mid tapers dim
"Breathed the warm prayer, or tuned the midnight hymn;
"Where trembling penitents their guilt confess'd,
"Where want had succour, and contrition rest;
"There weary men from trouble found relief,
"There men in sorrow found repose from grief.
"To scenes like these the fainting soul retired;
"Revenge and anger in these cells expired;
"By pity soothed, remorse lost half her fears,
"And soften'd pride dropp'd penitential tears.
"Then convent walls and nunnery spires arose,
"In pleasant spots which monk or abbot chose;
"When counts and barons saints devoted fed,
"And making cheap exchange, had pray'r for bread.
"Now all is lost, the earth where abbeys stood
"Is layman's land, the glebe, the stream, the wood:
"His oxen low where monks retired to eat,
"His cows repose upon the prior's seat:
"And wanton doves within the cloisters bill,
"Where the chaste votary warr'd with wanton will."
Such is the change they mourn, but they restrain
The rage of grief, and passively complain.
We've Baptists old and new;[8] forbear to ask
What the distinction—I decline the task;
This I perceive, that when a sect grows old,
Converts are few, and the converted cold:
First comes the hot-bed heat, and while it glows
The plants spring up, and each with vigour grows:
Then comes the cooler day, and though awhile
The verdure prospers and the blossoms smile,
Yet poor the fruit, and form'd by long delay,
Nor will the profits for the culture pay;
The skilful gard'ner then no longer stops,
But turns to other beds for bearing crops.
Some Swedenborgians in our streets are found,
Those wandering walkers on enchanted ground,
Who in our world can other worlds survey,
And speak with spirits though confined in clay:
Of Bible-mysteries they the keys possess,
Assured themselves, where wiser men but guess:
'Tis theirs to see around, about, above,—
How spirits mingle thoughts, and angels move;
Those whom our grosser views from us exclude,
To them appear—a heavenly multitude;
While the dark sayings, seal'd to men like us,
Their priests interpret, and their flocks discuss.[9]
But while these gifted men, a favour'd fold,
New powers exhibit and new worlds behold;
Is there not danger lest their minds confound
The pure above them with the gross around?
May not these Phaëtons, who thus contrive
'Twixt heaven above and earth beneath to drive,
When from their flaming chariots they descend,
The worlds they visit in their fancies blend?
Alas! too sure on both they bring disgrace,
Their earth is crazy, and their heaven is base.
We have, it seems, who treat, and doubtless well,
Of a chastising not awarding Hell;
Who are assured that an offended God
Will cease to use the thunder and the rod;
A soul on earth, by crime and folly stain'd,
When here corrected has improvement gain'd;
In other state still more improved to grow,
And nobler powers in happier world to know;
New strength to use in each divine employ,
And more enjoying, looking to more joy.[10]
A pleasing vision! could we thus be sure
Polluted souls would be at length so pure;
The view is happy, we may think it just,
It may be true—but who shall add, it must?
To the plain words and sense of Sacred Writ,
With all my heart I reverently submit;
But where it leaves me doubtful, I'm afraid
To call conjecture to my reason's aid;
Thy thoughts, thy ways, great God! are not as mine,
And to thy mercy I my soul resign.
Jews are with us, but far unlike to those,
Who, led by David, warr'd with Israel's foes;
Unlike to those whom his imperial son
Taught truths divine—the Preacher Solomon;
Nor war nor wisdom yield our Jews delight;
They will not study, and they dare not fight.[11]
These are, with us, a slavish, knavish crew,
Shame and dishonour to the name of Jew;
The poorest masters of the meanest arts,
With cunning heads, and cold and cautious hearts;
They grope their dirty way to petty gains,
While poorly paid for their nefarious pains.

[8] The English Baptists are divided into two classes: one, that of the *General* Baptists, or Remonstrants, because they believe that God has excluded no man from salvation by any sovereign decree; the other are called *Particular*, or Calvinistic Baptists, because they agree very nearly with the Calvinists, or Presbyterians, in their religious sentiments."—Mosheim.]

[9] [Baron Swedenborg, the founder of the "New Jerusalem Church," asserts, that in the year 1743, the Lord manifested himself to him in a personal appearance, and at the same time opened his spiritual eyes, so that he was enabled constantly to see and converse with celestial beings. "As often," says he, "as I conversed with angels face to face, it was in their habitations, which are like to our houses on earth, but far more beautiful and magnificent; having rooms, chambers, and apartments, in great variety, as also spacious courts belonging to them, together with gardens, parterres of flowers, fields, &c., where the angels are formed into societies. They dwell in contiguous habitations, disposed after the manner of our cities, in streets, walks, and squares. I have had the privilege to walk through them, to examine all around them, and to enter their houses." The baron and his followers also hold, that the sacred Scripture contains three distinct senses, viz. the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural, all united by correspondencies—of which correspondencies the Swedenborgians alone possess the key. See his 'Universal Theology,' and 'Treatise concerning Heaven and Hell.']

[10] ["The Universalists teach the universal grace of God towards all apostate men; and consequently a universal atonement, and a call to all men. They are divided into two classes. Some ascribe to the means of grace which God affords, sufficient power to enlighten and sanctify all men; and teach, that it depends on the voluntary conduct of men, whether the grace of God shall produce its effects on them or not. Others maintain, that God indeed wishes to make all men happy, only on the condition of their believing; and that this faith originates from the sovereign and irresistible operation of God."—Mosheim.]

[11] [Some may object to this assertion; to whom I beg leave to answer that I do not use the word *fight* in the sense of the Jew Mendoza.

Amazing race! deprived of land and laws,
A general language and a public cause;
With a religion none can now obey,
With a reproach that none can take away:
A people still, whose common ties are gone;
Who, mix'd with every race, are lost in none.
What said their Prophet?—"Shouldst thou disobey,
" The Lord shall take thee from thy land away;
" Thou shalt a by-word and a proverb be,
" And all shall wonder at thy woes and thee;
" Daughter and son, shalt thou, while captive, have,
" And see them made the bond-maid and the slave;
" He, whom thou leav'st, the Lord thy God, shall bring
" War to thy country on an eagle-wing.
" A people strong and dreadful to behold,
" Stern to the young, remorseless to the old;
" Masters whose speech thou canst not understand,
" By cruel signs shall give the harsh command:
" Doubtful of life shalt thou by *night*, by day,
" For grief, and dread, and trouble pine away;
" Thy evening wish,—Would God I saw the sun!
" Thy morning sigh,—Would God the day were done![12]
" Thus shalt thou suffer, and to distant times
" Regret thy misery, and lament thy crimes."
A part there are, whom doubtless man might trust,
Worthy as wealthy, pure, religious, just;
They who with patience, yet with rapture, look
On the strong promise of the Sacred Book:
As unfulfill'd th' endearing words they view,
And blind to truth, yet own their prophets true;[13]
Well pleased they look for Sion's coming state,
Nor think of Julian's boast and Julian's fate.[14]
More might I add: I might describe the flocks
Made by Seceders from the ancient stocks;
Those who will not to any guide submit,
Nor find one creed to their conceptions fit—
Each sect, they judge, in something goes astray,
And every church has lost the certain way![15]
Then for themselves they carve out creed and laws,
And weigh their atoms, and divide their straws.
A Sect remains, which, though divided long
In hostile parties, both are fierce and strong,
And into each enlists a warm and zealous throng.
Soon as they rose in fame, the strife arose,
The Calvinistic these, th' Arminian those;
With Wesley some remain'd, the remnant Whitfield chose.
Now various leaders both the parties take,
And the divided hosts their new divisions make.[16]
See yonder Preacher![17] to his people pass,
Borne up and swell'd by tabernacle-gas:
Much he discourses, and of various points,
All unconnected, void of limbs and joints;
He rails, persuades, explains, and moves the will
By fierce bold words, and strong mechanic skill.
"That Gospel, Paul with zeal and love maintain'd,
" To others lost, to you is now explain'd;
" No worldly learning can these points discuss,
" Books teach them not as they are taught to us.

[12] See the Book of Deuteronomy, chap. xxviii.—["If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth; and thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee. Thy sons and thy daughters shall go into captivity. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!"]

[13] [When I turn my thoughts to the past and present situation of this peculiar people, I do not see how any Christian nation, according to the spirit of their religion, *can* refuse admission to the Jews, who, in completion of those very prophecies on which Christianity rests, are to be scattered and disseminated amongst all people and nations over the face of the earth. The sin and obduracy of their forefathers are amongst the undoubted records of our gospel; but I doubt if this can be a sufficient reason why we should hold them in such general odium through so many ages, seeing how naturally the son follows the faith of the father, and how much too general a thing it is amongst mankind to profess any particular form of religion, that devolves upon them by inheritance, rather than by free election and conviction of reason, founded upon examination.—CUMBERLAND.]

[14] His boast, that he would rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem; his fate (whatever becomes of the miraculous part of the story), that he died before the foundation was laid. ["An edict was issued by Julian for the rebuilding of the Temple on Mount Moriah, and the restoration of the Jewish worship in its original splendour. The whole Jewish world was in commotion; they crowded from the most distant quarters to be present and assist in the great national work. Their wealth was poured forth in lavish profusion. Men cheerfully surrendered the hard-won treasures of their avarice; women offered up the ornaments of their vanity. Already was the work commenced; already had they dug down to a considerable depth, and were preparing to lay the foundation, when suddenly flames of fire came bursting from the centre of the hill, accompanied with terrific explosions. The affrighted workmen fled on all sides, and the labours were suspended at once by this unforeseen and awful sign. The discomfiture of the Jews was completed; and the resumption of their labours, could they have recovered from their panic, was for ever broken off by the death of Julian."—MILMAN.]

[15] [Original edition:—

True Independents: while they Calvin hate,
They heed as little what Socinians state;
They judge Arminians, Antinomians stray,
Nor England's Church, nor Church on earth obey.]

[16] [While Wesley was actively engaged in establishing the influence of the Methodists, and extending the number of his converts, he received a painful wound in an unexpected quarter, from the pertinacity with which Whitfield and a considerable proportion of his disciples adhered to the peculiar doctrine of Calvin, and opposed Wesley's extravagant notion of the possibility of sinless perfection being attained in the present life. They were, however, soon personally reconciled; but the difference remained as to doctrine; their respective followers were, according to custom, less charitable than themselves; and never was man more bitterly reviled, insulted, and misrepresented, than Wesley was through the remainder of his life by the Calvinistic Methodists.—SOUTHEY.]

[17] [William Huntington was the son of a day-labourer in the Weald of Kent. The early part of his life was passed in menial service, and other humble occupations. After rioting in every low vice for several years, he was, according to his own account, suddenly and miraculously converted, and became a preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. Having lost his first wife, he married the rich widow of Sir James Saunderson, a London alderman, and passed the latter part of his life in affluence. He died in 1813. See *ante*, p. 186, and *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxiv.]

" Illiterate call us !—let their wisest man
" Draw forth his thousands as your Teacher can:
" They give their moral precepts: so, they say,
" Did Epictetus once, and Seneca;
" One was a slave, and slaves we all must be,
" Until the Spirit comes and sets us free.
" Yet hear you nothing from such man but works;
" They make the Christian service like the Turks.
" Hark to the Churchman: day by day he cries,
" 'Children of Men, be virtuous and be wise:
" 'Seek patience, justice, temp'rance, meekness, truth;
" 'In age be courteous, be sedate in youth.'—
" So they advise, and when such things be read,
" How can we wonder that their flocks are dead?
" The Heathens wrote of Virtue: they could dwell
" On such light points: in them it might be well;
" They might for virtue strive; but I maintain,
" Our strife for virtue would be proud and vain.
" When Samson carried Gaza's gates so far,
" Lack'd he a helping hand to bear the bar?
" Thus the most virtuous must in bondage groan:
" Samson is grace, and carries all alone.[18]
" Hear you not priests their feeble spirits spend,
" In bidding Sinners turn to God, and mend;
" To check their passions and to walk aright,
" To run the Race, and fight the glorious Fight?
" Nay more—to pray, to study, to improve,
" To grow in goodness, to advance in love?
" Oh! Babes and Sucklings, dull of heart and slow,
" Can Grace be gradual? Can Conversion grow?
" The work is done by instantaneous call;
" Converts at once are made, or not at all;
" Nothing is left to grow, reform, amend,
" The first emotion is the Movement's end:
" If once forgiven, Debt can be no more;
" If once adopted, will the heir be poor?
" The man who gains the twenty-thousand prize,
" Does he by little and by little rise?
" There can no fortune for the Soul be made,
" By peddling cares and savings in her trade.
" Why are our sins forgiven?—Priests reply,
" —Because by Faith on Mercy we rely;
" 'Because, believing, we repent and pray.'
" Is this their doctrine?—then they go astray;
" We're pardon'd neither for belief nor deed,
" For faith nor practice, principle nor creed;
" Nor for our sorrow for our former sin,
" Nor for our fears when better thoughts begin;
" Nor prayers nor penance in the cause avail,
" All strong remorse, all soft contrition fail:
" It is the *Call!* till that proclaims us free,
" In darkness, doubt, and bondage we must be;
" Till that *assures* us, we've in vain endured,
" And all is over when we're once assured.[19]
" This is Conversion:—First there comes a cry
" Which utters, 'Sinner, thou 'rt condemn'd to die;'
" Then the struck soul to every aid repairs,
" To church and altar, ministers and prayers;
" In vain she strives,—involved, ingulf'd in sin,
" She looks for hell, and seems already in:
" When in this travail, the New Birth comes on,
" And in an instant every pang is gone;
" The mighty work is done without our pains,—
" Claim but a part, and not a part remains.[20]
" All this experience tells the Soul, and yet
" These moral men their pence and farthings set
" Against the terrors of the countless Debt;
" But such compounders, when they come to jail,
" Will find that Virtues never serve as bail.
" So much to duties: now to Learning look,
" And see their priesthood piling book on book;
" Yea, books of infidels, we're told, and plays,
" Put out by heathens in the wink'd-on days;
" The very letters are of crooked kind,
" And show the strange perverseness of their mind.
" Have I this Learning? When the Lord would speak,
" Think ye he needs the Latin or the Greek?
" And lo! with all their learning, when they rise
" To preach, in view the ready sermon lies;
" Some low-prized stuff they purchased at the stalls,
" And more like Seneca's than mine or Paul's:
" Children of Bondage, how should they explain
" The Spirit's freedom, while they wear a chain?
" They study words, for meanings grow perplex'd,
" And slowly hunt for truth from text to text,
" Through Greek and Hebrew:—we the meaning seek
" Of that within, who every tongue can speak:
" This all can witness; yet the more I know,
" The more a meek and humble mind I show.
" No; let the Pope, the high and mighty priest,
" Lord to the poor, and servant to the Beast;
" Let bishops, deans, and prebendaries swell
" With pride and fatness till their hearts rebel:
" I'm meek and modest:—if I could be proud,
" This crowded meeting, lo! th' amazing crowd!
" Your mute attention, and your meek respect,
" My spirit's fervour, and my words' effect,
" Might stir th' unguarded soul; and oft to me
" The Tempter speaks, whom I compel to flee;
" He goes in fear, for he my force has tried,—
" Such is my power! but can you call it pride?

[18] Whoever has attended to the books or preaching of these enthusiastic people, must have observed much of this kind of absurd and foolish application of scripture history; it seems to them as reasoning.

[19] ["A certain captain John Underhill affirmed, that, having long lain under a spirit of bondage, he could get no assurance; till, at length, as he was taking a pipe of tobacco, the Spirit set home upon him an absolute promise of free grace, with such assurance and joy, that he had never since doubted of his good estate, neither should he, whatever sins he might fall into. And he endeavoured to prove, that, as the Lord was pleased to convert Saul while he was persecuting, so he might manifest himself to him while making a moderate use of the good creature tobacco."—BELKNAP's *New Hampshire*.]

[20] [The following is from Huntington's account of his own conversion:—"I was standing on a ladder, in the act of pruning a tree, in a miserable state of melancholy. Suddenly, a great light shone around me; quick as lightning, and far exceeding the sun in brightness. My hair stood upright, and my blood rankled in my veins; and presently a voice from heaven said to me, in plain words, 'Lay by your forms of prayer, and go pray to Jesus Christ: do not you see how pitifully he speaks to sinners?' These were the words verbatim. I immediately retired into the tool-house, pulled off my blue apron, covered my face with it, and prayed precisely thus: 'O Lord, I am a sinner,' &c. That moment the spirit of grace and supplication was poured into my soul, and I forthwith spake as the spirit gave me utterance. I fell on my face, but the vision was still present; and when I arose all my sins had spread their wings and taken flight."]

" No, Fellow-Pilgrims! of the things I 've shown
" I might be proud, were they indeed my own!
" But they are lent: and well you know the source
" Of all that 's mine, and must confide of course:
" Mine! no, I err; 't is but consign'd to me,
" And I am nought but steward and trustee."

FAR other Doctrines yon Arminian speaks;
" Seek Grace," he cries, " for he shall find who seeks."
This is the ancient stock by Wesley led;
They the pure body, he the reverend head:
All innovation they with dread decline,
Their John the elder was the John divine.
Hence, still their moving prayer, the melting hymn,
The varied accent, and the active limb:
Hence that implicit faith in Satan's might,
And their own matchless prowess in the fight.
In every act they see that lurking foe,
Let loose awhile, about the world to go;
A dragon flying round the earth, to kill
The heavenly hope, and prompt the carnal will;[21]
Whom sainted knights attack in sinners' cause,
And force the wounded victim from his paws;
Who but for them would man's whole race subdue,
For not a hireling will the foe pursue.
" Show me one Churchman who will rise and pray
" Through half the night, though lab'ring all the day,
" Always abounding—show me him, I say:"—
Thus cries the Preacher, and he adds, "Their sheep
" Satan devours at leisure as they sleep.
" Not so with us; we drive him from the fold,
" For ever barking and for ever bold:
" While they securely slumber, all his schemes
" Take full effect,—the Devil never dreams:
" Watchful and changeful through the world he goes,
" And few can trace this deadliest of their foes;
" But I detect, and at his work surprise
" The subtle Serpent under all disguise.
" Thus to Man's soul the Foe of Souls will speak,
"—' A Saint elect, you can have nought to seek;
" ' Why all this labour in so plain a case,
" ' Such care to run, when certain of the race?'
" All this he urges to the carnal will,
" He knows you 're slothful, and would have you still:
" Be this your answer,—' Satan, I will keep
" ' Still on the watch till you are laid asleep.'
" Thus too the Christian's progress he 'll retard:—
" ' The gates of mercy are for ever barr'd;
" ' And that with bolts so driven and so stout,
" ' Ten thousand workmen cannot wrench them out.'
" To this deceit you have but one reply,—
" Give to the Father of all Lies the lie.
" A Sister's weakness he 'll by fits surprise,
" His her wild laughter, his her piteous cries;
" And should a pastor at her side attend,
" He 'll use her organs to abuse her friend:
" These are possessions—unbelieving wits
" Impute them all to Nature: ' They 're her fits,
" ' Caused by commotions in the nerves and brains;'—
" Vain talk! but they 'll be fitted for their pains.
" These are in part the ills the Foe has wrought,
" And these the Churchman thinks not worth his thought;
" They bid the troubled try for peace and rest,
" Compose their minds, and be no more distress'd;
" As well might they command the passive shore
" To keep secure, and be o'erflow'd no more;
" To the wrong subject is their skill applied,—
" To act like workmen, they should stem the tide.
" These are the Church-Physicians: they are paid
" With noble fees for their advice and aid;
" Yet know they not the inward pulse to feel,
" To ease the anguish, or the wound to heal.
" With the sick Sinner, thus their work begins:
" ' Do you repent you of your former sins?
" ' Will you amend if you revive and live?
" ' And, pardon seeking, will you pardon give?
" ' Have you belief in what your Lord has done,
" ' And are you thankful?—all is well, my son.'
" A way far different ours—we thus surprise
" A soul with questions, and demand replies:
" ' How dropp'd you first,' I ask, ' the legal Yoke?
" ' What the first word the living Witness spoke?
" ' Perceived you thunders roar and lightnings shine,
" ' And tempests gathering ere the Birth divine?
" ' Did fire, and storm, and earthquake all appear
" ' Before that still small voice, *What dost thou here?*
" ' Hast thou by day and night, and soon and late,
" ' Waited and watch'd before Admission-gate;
" ' And so a pilgrim and a soldier pass'd
" ' To Sion's hill through battle and through blast?
" ' Then in thy way didst thou thy foe attack,
" ' And mad'st thou proud Apollyon turn his back?'
" Heart-searching things are these, and shake the mind,
" Yea, like the rustling of a mighty wind.
" Thus would I ask:—' Nay, let me question now,
" ' How sink my sayings in your bosoms? how?
" ' Feel you a quickening? drops the subject deep?
" ' Stupid and stony, no! you 're all asleep;
" ' Listless and lazy, waiting for a close,
" ' As if at church;—do I allow repose?
" ' Am I a legal minister? do I
" ' With form or rubrick, rule or rite comply?
" ' Then whence this quiet, tell me, I beseech?
" ' One might believe you heard your Rector preach,
" ' Or his assistant dreamer:—Oh! return,
" ' Ye times of burning, when the heart would burn;

[21] ["We cannot doubt," says Wesley, "but the moment unholy spirits leave the body, they find themselves surrounded by spirits of their own kind, probably human as well as diabolical. It is not impossible God may suffer Satan to employ them in inflicting evils of various kinds on the men that know not God. For this end, they may raise storms by sea or land; they may shoot meteors through the air; they may occasion earthquakes; and in numberless ways afflict those whom they are not suffered to destroy. May they not be employed in tempting wicked yea, good men to sin?"]

" 'Now hearts are ice, and you, my freezing fold,
" 'Have spirits sunk and sad, and bosoms stony-cold.'
" Oh! now again for those prevailing powers,
" Which once began this mighty work of ours;
" When the wide field, God's Temple, was the place,
" And birds flew by to catch a breath of grace;
" When 'mid his timid friends and threat'ning foes,
" Our zealous chief as Paul at Athens rose:
" When with infernal spite and knotty clubs
" The Ill-One arm'd his scoundrels and his scrubs;
" And there were flying all around the spot
" Brands at the Preacher, but they touch'd him not: [22]
" Stakes brought to smite him, threaten'd in his cause,
" And tongues, attuned to curses, roar'd applause;
" Louder and louder grew his awful tones,
" Sobbing and sighs were heard, and rueful groans;
" Soft women fainted, prouder man express'd
" Wonder and woe, and butchers smote the breast;
" Eyes wept, ears tingled; stiff'ning on each head,
" The hair drew back, and Satan howl'd and fled. [23]
" In that soft season when the gentle breeze
" Rises all round, and swells by slow degrees;
" Till tempests gather, when through all the sky
" The thunders rattle, and the lightnings fly;
" When rain in torrents wood and vale deform,
" And all is horror, hurricane, and storm:
" So, when the Preacher in that glorious time,
" Than clouds more melting, more than storm sublime,
" Dropp'd the new Word, there came a charm around;
" Tremors and terrors rose upon the sound;
" The stubborn spirits by his force he broke,
" As the fork'd lightning rives the knotted oak:
" Fear, hope, dismay, all signs of shame or grace,
" Chain'd every foot, or featured every face;
" Then took his sacred trump a louder swell,
" And now they groan'd, they sicken'd, and they fell;
" Again he sounded, and we heard the cry
" Of the Word-wounded, as about to die;
" Further and further spread the conquering word,
" As loud he cried—'the Battle of the Lord.'
" E'en those apart who were the sound denied,
" Fell down instinctive, and in spirit died,
" Nor stay'd he yet—his eye, his frown, his speech,
" His very gesture had a power to teach:
" With outstretch'd arms, strong voice, and piercing call,
" He won the field, and made the Dagons fall;
" And thus in triumph took his glorious way,
" Through scenes of horror, terror, and dismay." [24]

LETTER V.

Say then which class to greater folly stoop,
The great in promise, or the poor in hope?

Be brave, for your leader is brave, and vows reformation; there shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny; and the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops. I will make it felony to drink small beer; all shall eat and drink on my score, and I will apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers; and they shall all worship me as their lord.—SHAKSPEARE'S *Henry VI.*

THE ELECTION.

The Evils of the Contest, and how in part to be avoided—The Miseries endured by a Friend of the Candidate — The various Liberties taken with him, who has no personal Interest in the Success—The unreasonable Expectations of Voters—The Censures of the opposing Party—The Vices as well as Follies shown in such Time of Contest—Plans and Cunning of Electors—Evils which remain after the Decision, opposed in vain by the Efforts of the Friendly, and of the Successful; among whom is the Mayor—Story of his Advancement till he was raised to the Government of the Borough—These Evils not to be placed in Balance with the Liberty of the People, but are yet Subjects of just Complaint.

YES, our Election 's past, and we 've been free,
Somewhat as madmen without keepers be;
And such desire of Freedom has been shown,
That both the parties wish'd her all their own:
All our free smiths and cobblers in the town
Were loth to lay such pleasant freedom down;
To put the bludgeon and cockade aside,
And let us pass unhurt and undefied.
True! you might then your party's sign produce,
And so escape with only half th' abuse:
With half the danger as you walk'd along,
With rage and threat'ning but from half the throng.
This you might do, and not your fortune mend,
For where you lost a foe, you gain'd a friend;
And to distress you, vex you, and expose,
Election-friends are worse than any foes;

22 ["Believing himself," says Mr. Southey, "to be an extraordinary person, and engaged in an enterprise of the most important character, he lent a ready faith to whatever marvels had a tendency to designate him as the favourite of God, or the peculiar object of Satan's fury. If any among his hearers pretended to visions, or to be the victim of diabolical possession, he never seems to have thought it necessary to examine into the truth of the ecstasies, but to have taken all for granted. If his horses fell lame, it was the malice of 'the old Murderer,' which had power over them. If his progress was cheered by a favourable change of weather, he immediately recognised the peculiar finger of Providence encouraging him to persevere in his labours."]

23 [Wesley was not only an enthusiast himself, but the cause of still greater enthusiasm in others, and had the unhappy art of inoculating his audience with convulsions and frenzy, surpassing the most extraordinary symptoms to which animal magnetism has given rise. Violent outcries, howling, gnashing of teeth, frightful convulsions, frenzy, epileptic and apoplectic symptoms, were excited, in turn, on different individuals. Cries were heard as of people being put to the sword; and the ravings of despair, which seemed to arise from an actual foretaste of torment, were strangely blended with rapturous shouts of 'Glory! glory!'—SOUTHEY.]

24 [See the Life of Wesley by Southey, or John Wesley's own Journals, *passim*. The reader will also find many curious details of the extravagance of methodistical fanaticism, in its first period, in the autobiography of the late excellent and learned Dr. Adam Clarke.]

The party-curse is with the canvass past,
But party-friendship, for your grief, will last.
Friends of all kinds; the civil and the rude,
Who humbly wish, or boldly dare t' intrude:
These beg or take a liberty to come
(Friends should be free), and make your house their home;
They know that warmly you their cause espouse,
And come to make their boastings and their bows:
You scorn their manners, you their words mistrust,
But you must hear them, and they know you must.
One plainly sees a friendship firm and true,
Between the noble candidate and you;
So humbly begs (and states at large the case),
"You'll think of Bobby and the little place."
Stifling his shame by drink, a wretch will come,
And prate your wife and daughter from the room:
In pain you hear him, and at heart despise,
Yet with heroic mind your pangs disguise;
And still in patience to the sot attend,
To show what man can bear to serve a friend.
One enters hungry—not to be denied,
And takes his place and jokes—"We're of a side,"
Yet worse, the proser who, upon the strength
Of his one vote, has tales of three hours' length;
This sorry rogue you bear, yet with surprise
Start at his oaths, and sicken at his lies.
Then comes there one, and tells in friendly way
What the opponents in their anger say;
All that through life has vex'd you, all abuse,
Will this kind friend in pure regard produce;
And having through your own offences run,
Adds (as appendage) what your friends have done.
Has any female cousin made a trip
To Gretna Green, or more vexatious slip?
Has your wife's brother, or your uncle's son,
Done aught amiss, or is he thought t' have done?
Is there of all your kindred some who lack
Vision direct, or have a gibbous back?
From your unlucky name may quips and puns
Be made by these upbraiding Goths and Huns?
To some great public character have you
Assign'd the fame to worth and talents due,
Proud of your praise?—In this, in any case,
Where the brute-spirit may affix disgrace,
These friends will smiling bring it, and the while
You silent sit, and practise for a smile.
Vain of their power, and of their value sure,
They nearly guess the tortures you endure;
Nor spare one pang—for they perceive your heart
Goes with the cause; you'd die before you'd start;
Do what they may, they're sure you'll not offend
Men who have pledged their honours to your friend.
Those friends indeed, who start as in a race,
May love the sport, and laugh at this disgrace;
They have in view the glory and the prize,
Nor heed the dirty steps by which they rise:
But we their poor associates lose the fame,
Though more than partners in the toil and shame.
Were this the whole; and did the time produce
But shame and toil, but riot and abuse;
We might be then from serious griefs exempt,
And view the whole with pity and contempt.
Alas! but here the vilest passions rule;
It is Seduction's, is Temptation's school;
Where vices mingle in the oddest ways,
The grossest slander and the dirtiest praise;
Flattery enough to make the vainest sick,
And clumsy stratagem, and scoundrel trick:
Nay more, your anger and contempt to cause,
These, while they fish for profit, claim applause;
Bribed, bought, and bound, they banish shame and fear;
Tell you they're staunch, and have a soul sincere;
Then talk of honour, and, if doubt's express'd,
Show where it lies, and smite upon the breast.
Among these worthies, some at first declare
For whom they vote: he then has most to spare;
Others hang off—when coming to the post
Is spurring time, and then he'll spare the most:
While some demurring, wait, and find at last
The bidding languish, and the market past;
These will affect all bribery to condemn,
And be it Satan laughs, he laughs at them.
Some too are pious—One desired the Lord
To teach him where "to drop his little word;
"To lend his vote where it will profit best;
"Promotion came not from the east or west;
"But as their freedom had promoted some,
"He should be glad to know which way 't would come.
"It was a naughty world, and where to sell
"His precious charge, was more than he could tell."
"But you succeeded?"—True, at mighty cost,
And our good friend, I fear, will think he's lost:
Inns, horses, chaises, dinners, balls, and notes;
What fill'd their purses, and what drench'd their throats;
The private pension, and indulgent lease,—
Have all been granted to these friends who fleece;
Friends who will hang like burs upon his coat,
And boundless judge the value of a vote.
And though the terrors of the time be pass'd,
There still remain the scatterings of the blast;
The boughs are parted that entwined before,
And ancient harmony exists no more;
The gusts of wrath our peaceful seats deform,
And sadly flows the sighing of the storm:
Those who have gain'd are sorry for the gloom,
But they who lost, unwilling peace should come;
There open envy, here suppress'd delight,
Yet live till time shall better thoughts excite,
And so prepare us, by a six-years' truce,
Again for riot, insult, and abuse.
Our worthy Mayor, on the victorious part,
Cries out for peace, and cries with all his heart;
He, civil creature! ever does his best
To banish wrath from every voter's breast;
"For where," says he, with reason strong and plain,
"Where is the profit? what will anger gain?"
His short stout person he is wont to brace
In good brown broad-cloth, edg'd with two-inch lace,
When in his seat; and still the coat seems new,
Preserved by common use of seaman's blue.
He was a fisher from his earliest day,
And placed his nets within the Borough's bay;
Where, by his skates, his herrings, and his soles,
He lived, nor dream'd of Corporation-Doles;[1]

[1] I am informed that some explanation is here necessary, though I am ignorant for what class of readers it can be required. Some corporate bodies have actual property, as appears by their receiving rents; and they obtain money on

But toiling saved, and saving, never ceased
Till he had box'd up twelvescore pounds at least:
He knew not money's power, but judged it best
Safe in his trunk to let his treasure rest;
Yet to a friend complain'd: "Sad charge, to keep
"So many pounds; and then I cannot sleep:"
"Then put it out," replied the friend:—"What, give
"My money up? why then I could not live:"
"Nay, but for interest place it in his hands
"Who 'll give you mortgage on his house or lands."
"Oh but," said Daniel, "that 's a dangerous plan;
"He may be robb'd like any other man:"
"Still he is bound, and you may be at rest,
"More safe the money than within your chest;
"And you 'll receive, from all deductions clear,
"Five pounds for every hundred, every year."
"What good in that?" quoth Daniel, "for 't is plain,
"If part I take, there can but part remain:"
"What! you, my friend, so skill'd in gainful things,
"Have you to learn what Interest money brings?"
"Not so," said Daniel, "perfectly I know,
"He 's the most interest who has most to show."
"True! and he 'll show the more, the more he lends;
"Thus he his weight and consequence extends;
"For they who borrow must restore each sum,
"And pay for use. What, Daniel, art thou dumb?"
For much amazed was that good man.—"Indeed!"
Said he with glad'ning eye, "will money breed?"[2]
"How have I lived? I grieve, with all my heart,
"For my late knowledge in this precious art:—
"Five pounds for every hundred will he give?
"And then the hundred?—I begin to live."—
So he began, and other means he found,
As he went on, to multiply a pound:
Though blind so long to Interest, all allow
That no man better understands it now:
Him in our Body-Corporate we chose,
And once among us, he above us rose;
Stepping from post to post, he reach'd the Chair,
And there he now reposes—that 's the Mayor.[3]
But 't is not he, 't is not the kinder few,
The mild, the good, who can our peace renew;
A peevish humour swells in every eye,
The warm are angry, and the cool are shy;
There is no more the social board at whist,
The good old partners are with scorn dismiss'd;
No more with dog and lantern comes the maid,
To guide the mistress when the rubber's play'd;
Sad shifts are made lest ribands blue and green
Should at one table, at one time, be seen:
On care and merit none will now rely,
'T is Party sells what party-friends must buy;
The warmest burgess wears a bodger's coat,
And fashion gains less int'rest than a vote;
Uncheck'd the vintner still his poison vends,
For he too votes, and can command his friends.
But this admitted; be it still agreed,
These ill effects from noble cause proceed;
Though like some vile excrescences they be,
The tree they spring from is a sacred tree,
And its true produce, Strength and Liberty.
Yet if we could th' attendant ills suppress,
If we could make the sum of mischief less;
If we could warm and angry men persuade
No more man's common comforts to invade;
And that old ease and harmony re-seat,
In all our meetings, so in joy to meet;
Much would of glory to the Muse ensue,
And our good Vicar would have less to do.

LETTER VI.

Quid leges sine moribus
Vanæ proficiunt? HORACE.

Væ! misero mihi, mea nunc facinora
Aperiuntur, clam quæ speravi fore.—MANILIUS.

PROFESSIONS—LAW.

Trades and Professions of every kind to be found in the Borough—Its Seamen and Soldiers—Law, the Danger of the Subject—Coddrington's Offence—Attorneys increased; their splendid Appearance, how supported—Some worthy Exceptions—Spirit of Litigation, how stirred up—A Boy articled as a Clerk; his Ideas—How this Profession perverts the Judgment—Actions appear through this Medium in a false Light—Success from honest Application—Archer, a worthy Character—Swallow, a Character of different kind—His Origin, Progress, Success, &c.

"TRADES and Professions"—these are themes the Muse,
Left to her freedom, would forbear to choose;
But to our Borough they in truth belong,
And we, perforce, must take them in our song.
Be it then known that we can boast of these
In all denominations, ranks, degrees;
All who our numerous wants through life supply,
Who soothe us sick, attend us when we die,
Or for the dead their various talents try.
Then have we those who live by secret arts,
By hunting fortunes, and by stealing hearts;
Or who by nobler means themselves advance,
Or who subsist by charity and chance.

the admission of members into their society; this they may lawfully share, perhaps. There are, moreover, other doles, of still greater value, of which it is not necessary for me to explain the nature or inquire into the legality.

[2] [Original edition:—
In fact, the Fisher was amaz'd; as soon
Could he have judged gold issued from the moon;
But being taught, he grieved with all his heart
For lack of knowledge in this precious act.]

[3] The circumstance here related is a fact; although it may appear to many almost incredible, that, in this country, and but few years since, a close and successful man should be a stranger to the method of increasing money by the loan of it. The minister of the place where the honest Fisherman resided, has related to me the apprehension and suspicion he witnessed; with trembling hand and dubious look, the careful man received and surveyed the bond given to him, and, after a sigh or two of lingering mistrust, he placed it in the coffer whence he had just before taken his cash; for which, and for whose increase, he now indulged a belief that it was indeed both promise and security.

Say, of our native heroes shall I boast,
Born in our streets, to thunder on our coast,
Our Borough-seamen? Could the timid Muse
More patriot-ardour in their breasts infuse;
Or could she paint their merit or their skill,
She wants not love, alacrity, or will:
But needless all; that ardour is their own,
And for their deeds, themselves have made them known.

Soldiers in arms! Defenders of our soil!
Who from destruction save us; who from spoil
Protect the sons of peace, who traffic, or who toil;
Would I could duly praise you; that each deed
Your foes might honour, and your friends might read:
This too is needless; you 've imprinted well
Your powers, and told what I should feebly tell:
Beside, a Muse like mine, to satire prone,
Would fail in themes where there is praise alone.
—Law shall I sing, or what to Law belongs?
Alas! there may be danger in such songs;
A foolish rhyme, 't is said, a trifling thing,
The law found treason, for it touch'd the King.[1]
But kings have mercy, in these happy times,
Or surely *One*[2] had suffered for his rhymes;
Our glorious Edwards and our Henrys bold,
So touch'd, had kept the reprobate in hold;
But he escap'd,—nor fear, thank Heav'n, have I,
Who love my king, for such offence to die.
But I am taught the danger would be much,
If these poor lines should one *attorney* touch—
(One of those *Limbs* of Law who 're always here;
The *Heads* come down to guide them twice a year.)
I might not swing, indeed, but he in sport
Would whip a rhymer on from court to court;
Stop him in each, and make him pay for all
The long proceedings in that dreaded Hall:—
Then let my numbers flow discreetly on,
Warn'd by the fate of luckless Coddrington,[3]
Lest some *attorney* (pardon me the name)
Should wound a poor *solicitor* for fame.

One Man of Law in George the Second's reign
Was all our frugal fathers would maintain;
He too was kept for forms; a man of peace,
To frame a contract, or to draw a lease:
He had a clerk, with whom he used to write
All the day long, with whom he drank at night,
Spare was his visage, moderate his bill,
And he so kind, men doubted of his skill.

Who thinks of this, with some amazement sees,
For one so poor, three flourishing at ease;
Nay, one in splendour!—see that mansion tall,
That lofty door, the far-resounding hall;
Well-furnish'd rooms, plate shining on the board,
Gay liveried lads, and cellar proudly stored:
Then say how comes it that such fortunes crown
These sons of strife, these terrors of the town?

Lo! that small Office! there th' incautious guest
Goes blindfold in, and that maintains the rest;
There in his web, th' observant spider lies,
And peers about for fat intruding flies;
Doubtful at first, he hears the distant hum,
And feels them fluttering as they nearer come;
They buzz and blink, and doubtfully they tread
On the strong bird-lime of the utmost thread;
But when they 're once entangled by the gin,
With what an eager clasp he draws them in;
Nor shall they 'scape, till after long delay,
And all that sweetens life is drawn away.[4]

"Nay, this," you cry, "is common-place, the tale
"Of petty tradesmen o'er their evening ale;
"There are who, living by the legal pen,
"Are held in honour,—'honourable men.'"

Doubtless—there are who hold manorial courts,
Or whom the trust of powerful friends supports;
Or who, by labouring through a length of time,
Have pick'd their way, unsullied by a crime.
These are the few—In this, in every place,
Fix the litigious rupture-stirring race;
Who to contention as to trade are led,
To whom dispute and strife are bliss and bread.

There is a doubtful Pauper, and we think
'T is not with us to give him meat and drink;
There is a Child; and 't is not mighty clear
Whether the mother lived with us a year:
A Road's indicted, and our seniors doubt
If in our proper boundary or without:
But what says our Attorney? He, our friend,
Tells us 't is just and manly to contend,

[1] ["It stands on record, that in Richard's times
A man was hang'd for very honest rhymes."—POPE.]

[2] [The poet no doubt alludes to Dr. Wolcot, who, under the well-known appellation of Peter Pindar, published various satires calculated to bring the person and character of George the Third into contempt and hatred. He died in 1819.]

[3] The account of Coddrington occurs in "The Mirrour for Magistrates." He suffered in the reign of Richard III. [The execution of *Collingbourne* was under colour of rebellion, but in reality on account of the doggerel couplet which he is introduced as quoting in "The Mirrour:"—

"They murder'd mee, for metring things amisse;
For wotst thou what? I am that Collingbourne,
Which made the ryme, whereof I well may mourn:—
'*The Cat, the Rat, and Lovell our Dog,*
'*Do rule all England, under a Hog!*'
Whereof the meaning was so playne and true,
That every fool perceived it at furst:
Most liked it; for most that most things knew
In hugger-mugger, mutter'd what they durst;
The tyraunt Prince of most was held accurst,
Both for his own and for his counsayl's faults,
Of whom were three, the naughtiest of the naughts.
Catesby was one, whom I called a Cat;
A crafty lawyer, catching all hee could.
The second Ratcliffe, whom I named a Rat,
A cruel beast to gnawe on whom hee should;
Lord Lovell barkt and bit whom Richard would,
Whom I therefore did rightly terme our Dog;
Wherewith to ryme I calde the King a Hog."

—Such are the verses headed "How Collingbourne was cruelly executed for a foolish rhyme." The *hog* of the original rhyme is, however, an allusion to the well-known *Silver Boar* of Richard's cognizance; whence also Gray's lines:—

"The bristled boar in infant gore
Wallows beneath the thorny shade," &c. &c.]

[4] ["He that with injury is grieved
And goes to law to be relieved,
Is sillier than a sottish chouse,
Who, when a thief has robb'd his house,
Applies himself to cunning men,
To help him to his goods again.
Others believe no voice t' an organ
So sweet as lawyer's in his bar gown,
Until with subtle cobweb-cheats
They 're catched in knotted law, like nets;
In which, when once they are imbrangled,
The more they stir, the more they're tangled."
BUTLER.]

"What! to a neighbouring parish yield your cause,
"While you have money, and the nation laws?
"What! lose without a trial, that which, tried,
"May—nay it must—be given on our side?
"All men of spirit would contend; such men
"Than lose a pound would rather hazard ten.
"What! be imposed on? No! a British soul
"Despises imposition, hates control:
"The law is open; let them, if they dare,
"Support their cause; the Borough need not spare.
"All I advise is vigour and good-will:
"Is it agreed then—Shall I file a bill?"

The trader, grazier, merchant, priest, and all,
Whose sons aspiring, to professions call,
Choose from their lads some bold and subtle boy,
And judge him fitted for this grave employ:
Him a keen old practitioner admits,
To write five years and exercise his wits:
The youth has heard—it is in fact his creed—
Mankind dispute, that Lawyers may be fee'd:
Jails, bailiffs, writs, all terms and threats of law,
Grow now familiar as once top and taw;
Rage, hatred, fear, the mind's severer ills,
All bring employment, all augment his bills:
As feels the surgeon for the mangled limb,
The mangled mind is but a job for him;
Thus taught to think, these legal reasoners draw
Morals and maxims from their views of Law;
They cease to judge by precepts taught in schools,
By man's plain sense, or by religious rules;
No! nor by law itself, in truth discern'd,
But as its statutes may be warp'd and turn'd:
How they should judge of man; his word and deed,
They in their books and not their bosoms read:
Of some good act you speak with just applause;
"No, no!" says he, "'t would be a losing cause:"
Blame you some tyrant's deed?—he answers, "Nay,
"He 'll get a verdict; heed you what you say."
Thus to conclusions from examples led,
The heart resigns all judgment to the head;
Law, law alone for ever kept in view,
His measures guides, and rules his conscience too;
Of ten commandments, he confesses three
Are yet in force, and tells you which they be,
As Law instructs him, thus: "Your neighbour's wife
"You must not take, his chattels, nor his life;
"Break these decrees, for damage you must pay;
"These you must reverence, and the rest—you may." [5]

Law was design'd to keep a state in peace;
To punish robbery, that wrong might cease;
To be impregnable: a constant fort,
To which the weak and injured might resort:
But these perverted minds its force employ,
Not to protect mankind, but to annoy;
And long as ammunition can be found,
Its lightning flashes and its thunders sound.

Or law with lawyers is an ample still,
Wrought by the passions' heat with chymic skill:
While the fire burns, the gains are quickly made,
And freely flow the profits of the trade;
Nay, when the fierceness fails, these artists blow
The dying fire, and make the embers glow,
As long as they can make the smaller profits flow:
At length the process of itself will stop,
When they perceive they 've drawn out every drop. [6]

Yet, I repeat, there are, who nobly strive
To keep the sense of moral worth alive;
Men who would starve, ere meanly deign to live
On what deception and chican'ry give;
And these at length succeed; they have their strife,
Their apprehensions, stops, and rubs in life;
But honour, application, care, and skill,
Shall bend opposing fortune to their will.

Of such is *Archer*, he who keeps in awe
Contending parties by his threats of law:
He, roughly honest, has been long a guide
In Borough-business, on the conquering side;
And seen so much of both sides, and so long,
He thinks the bias of man's mind goes wrong:
Thus, though he 's friendly, he is still severe,
Surly, though kind, suspiciously sincere:
So much he 's seen of baseness in the mind,
That, while a friend to man, he scorns mankind;
He knows the human heart, and sees with dread,
By slight temptation, how the strong are led;
He knows how interest can asunder rend
The bond of parent, master, guardian, friend,

[5] ["When money will hire you to plead for injustice against your own knowledge, and to use your wits to defraud the righteous and spoil his cause, or vex him with delays, for the advantage of your unrighteous client—I would not have your conscience for all your gains, nor your accompt to make for all the world."—BAXTER.

——"I asked him whether, as a moralist, he did not think that the practice of the law, in some degree, hurt the nice feeling of honesty? JOHNSON: 'Why, no, sir, if you act properly.' BOSWELL: 'But what do you think of supporting a cause which you know to be bad? JOHNSON: 'Sir, you do not know it to be good or bad till the judge determines it. I have said that you are to state facts fairly; so that your thinking, or what you call knowing, a cause to be bad, must be from reasoning—must be from your supposing your arguments to be weak and inconclusive. But, sir, that is not enough. An argument which does not convince yourself, may convince the judge to whom you urge it; and if it does convince him, why then, sir, you are wrong and he is right. It is his business to judge; and you are not to be confident in your own opinion that a cause is bad, but to say all you can for your client, and then hear the judge's opinion.' BOSWELL: 'But, sir, does not affecting a warmth when you have no warmth, and appearing to be clearly of one opinion, when you are in reality of another, does not such dissimulation impair one's honesty? Is there not some danger that a lawyer may put on the same mask in common life, in the intercourse with his friends?' JOHNSON: 'Why, no, sir. Every body knows you are paid for affecting warmth for your client; and it is, therefore, no dissimulation; the moment you come from the bar you resume your usual behaviour. Sir, a man will no more carry the artifice of the bar into the common intercourse of society, than a man who is paid for tumbling upon his hands will continue to tumble upon his hands when he should walk on his feet.'"—*Croker's Boswell*, vol. ii. p. 48.]

[6] ["Not one of all the trade that I know
E'er fails to take the ready rhino,
Which haply if his purse receive,
No human art can e'er retrieve;
Sooner the daring wights who go
Down to the watery world below,
Shall force old Neptune to disgorge
And vomit up the Royal George,
Than he who hath his bargain made,
And legally his cash convey'd,
Shall e'er his pocket reimburse
By diving in a lawyer's purse."—ANSTEY.]

To form a new and a degrading tie
'Twixt needy vice and tempting villainy.
Sound in himself, yet when such flaws appear,
He doubts of all, and learns that self to fear:
For where so dark the moral view is grown,
A timid conscience trembles for her own;
The pitchy-taint of general vice is such
As daubs the fancy, and you dread the touch.
Far unlike him was one in former times,
Famed for the spoil he gather'd by his crimes;
Who, while his brethren nibbling held their prey,
He like an eagle seized and bore the whole away.
Swallow, a poor Attorney, brought his boy
Up at his desk, and gave him his employ;
He would have bound him to an honest trade,
Could preparations have been duly made.
The clerkship ended, both the sire and son
Together did what business could be done;
Sometimes they 'd luck to stir up small disputes
Among their friends, and raise them into suits:
Though close and hard, the father was content
With this resource, now old and indolent:
But his young Swallow, gaping and alive,
To fiercer feelings, was resolved to thrive:—
"Father," he said, "but little can they win,
"Who hunt in couples where the game is thin;
"Let 's part in peace, and each pursue his gain,
"Where it may start—our love may yet remain."
The parent growl'd, he could n't think that love
Made the young cockatrice his den remove;
But, taught by habit, he the truth suppress'd,
Forced a frank look, and said he "thought it best."
Not long they 'd parted ere dispute arose;
The game they hunted quickly made them foes:
Some house, the father by his art had won,
Seem'd a fit cause of contest to the son,
Who raised a claimant, and then found a way
By a staunch witness to secure his prey.
The people cursed him, but in times of need
Trusted in one so certain to succeed:
By Law's dark by-ways he had stored his mind
With wicked knowledge, how to cheat mankind.
Few are the freeholds in our ancient town;
A copyright from heir to heir came down,
From whence some heat arose, when there was doubt
In point of heirship; but the fire went out,
Till our Attorney had the art to raise
The dying spark, and blow it to a blaze:
For this he now began his friends to treat;
His way to starve them was to make them eat,
And drink oblivious draughts—to his applause,
It must be said, he never starved a cause;
He 'd roast and boil'd upon his board; the boast
Of half his victims was his boil'd and roast;
And these at every hour:—he seldom took
Aside his client, till he 'd praised his cook;
Nor to an office led him, there in pain
To give his story and go out again;
But first, the brandy and the chine were seen,
And then the business came by starts between.
"Well, if 't is so, the house to you belongs;
"But have you money to redress these wrongs?
"Nay, look not sad, my friend; if you 're correct,
"You 'll find the friendship that you 'd not expect."
If right the man, the house was Swallow's own;
If wrong, his kindness and good-will were shown:
"Rogue!" "Villain!" "Scoundrel!" cried the losers all:
He let them cry, for what would that recall?
At length he left us, took a village seat,
And like a vulture look'd abroad for meat;
The Borough-booty, give it all its praise,
Had only served the appetite to raise;
But if from simple heirs he drew their land,
He might a noble feast at will command;
Still he proceeded by his former rules,
His bait, their pleasures, when he fished for fools—
Flagons and haunches on his board were placed,
And subtle avarice look'd like thoughtless waste:
Most of his friends, though youth from him had fled,
Were young, were minors, of their sires in dread;
Or those whom widow'd mothers kept in bounds,
And check'd their generous rage for steeds and hounds;
Or such as travell'd 'cross the land to view
A Christian's conflict with a boxing Jew:[7]
Some too had run upon Newmarket heath
With so much speed that they were out of breath;
Others had tasted claret, till they now
To humbler port would turn, and knew not how.
All these for favours would to Swallow run,
Who never sought their thanks for all he 'd done;
He kindly took them by the hand, then bow'd
Politely low, and thus his love avow'd—
(For he 'd a way that many judged polite,
A cunning dog—he 'd fawn before he 'd bite)—
"Observe, my friends, the frailty of our race
"When age unmans us—let me state a case:
"There 's our friend Rupert—we shall soon redress
"His present evil—drink to our success—
"I flatter not; but did you ever see
"Limbs better turn'd? a prettier boy than he?
"His senses all acute, his passions such
"As nature gave—she never does too much;
"His the bold wish the cup of joy to drain,
"And strength to bear it without qualm or pain.
"Now view his father as he dozing lies,
"Whose senses wake not when he opes his eyes;
"Who slips and shuffles when he means to walk,
"And lisps and gabbles if he tries to talk;
"Feeling he 's none—he could as soon destroy
"The earth itself, as aught it holds enjoy;
"A nurse attends him to lay straight his limbs,
"Present his gruel, and respect his whims:
"Now shall this dotard from our hero hold
"His lands and lordships? Shall he hide his gold?
"That which he cannot use, and dare not show,
"And will not give—why longer should he owe?
"Yet, 't would be murder should we snap the locks,
"And take the thing he worships from the box;
"So let him dote and dream: but, till he die,
"Shall not our generous heir receive supply?
"For ever sitting on the river's brink?
"And ever thirsty, shall he fear to drink?
"The means are simple, let him only wish,
"Then say he 's willing, and I 'll fill his dish."
They all applauded, and not least the boy,
Who now replied, "It fill'd his heart with joy
"To find he needed not deliv'rance crave
"Of death, or wish the Justice in the grave;

[7] [The boxing-match between Humphreys and the Jew Mendoza took place in 1788, and has already been alluded to; *antè*, p. 133.]

" Who, while he spent, would every art retain,
" Of luring home the scatter'd gold again;
" Just as a fountain gaily spirts and plays
" With what returns in still and secret ways."
Short was the dream of bliss; he quickly found,
His father's acres all were Swallow's ground.
Yet to those arts would other heroes lend
A willing ear, and Swallow was their friend;
Ever successful, some began to think
That Satan help'd him to his pen and ink;
And shrewd suspicions ran about the place,
" There was a compact"—I must leave the case.
But of the parties, had the fiend been one,
The business could not have been speedier done:
Still when a man has angled day and night,
The silliest gudgeons will refuse to bite:
So Swallow tried no more: but if they came
To seek his friendship, that remain'd the same:
Thus he retired in peace, and some would say
He 'd balk'd his partner, and had learn'd to pray.
To this some zealots lent an ear, and sought
How Swallow felt, then said " a change is wrought."
'T was true there wanted all the signs of grace,
But there were strong professions in their place;
Then, too, the less that men from him expect,
The more the praise to the converting sect;
He had not yet subscribed to all their creed,
Nor own'd a Call, but he confess'd the need:
His acquiescent speech, his gracious look,
That pure attention, when the brethren spoke,
Was all contrition,—he had felt the wound,
And with confession would again be sound.
True, Swallow's board had still the sumptuous treat;
But could they blame? the warmest zealots eat:
He drank—'t was needful his poor nerves to brace;
He swore—'t was habit; he was grieved—'t was grace:
What could they do a new-born zeal to nurse?
" His wealth 's undoubted—let him hold our purse;
" He 'll add his bounty, and the house we 'll raise
" Hard by the church, and gather all her strays:
" We 'll watch her sinners as they home retire,
" And pluck the brands from the devouring fire."
Alas! such speech was but an empty boast;
The good men reckon'd, but without their host;
Swallow, delighted, took the trusted store,
And own'd the sum: they did not ask for more,
Till more was needed; when they call'd for aid—
And had it?—No, their agent was afraid:
" Could he but know to whom he should refund,
" He would most gladly—nay, he 'd go beyond;
" But when such numbers claim'd, when some were gone,
" And others going—he must hold it on;
" The Lord would help them"—Loud their anger grew,
And while they threat'ning from his door withdrew,
He bow'd politely low, and bade them all adieu,[8]
But lives the man by whom such deeds are done?
Yes, many such—but Swallow's race is run;
His name is lost,—for though his sons have name,
It is not his, they all escape the shame;
Nor is there vestige now of all he had,
His means are wasted, for his heir was mad:
Still we of Swallow as a monster speak,
A hard bad man, who prey'd upon the weak.[9]

[8] ["The character of Archer, the honest but stern and suspicious attorney, and also that of the cunning and unprincipled Swallow, are admirably drawn; but in the latter Mr. Crabbe takes care to throw in some sarcasms on the zealots who were too ready to claim him as a convert, and trust him as their treasurer."—*Eclectic Review*.]

[9] I entertain the strongest, because the most reasonable hope, that no liberal practitioner in the Law will be offended by the notice taken of dishonourable and crafty attorneys. The increased difficulty of entering into the profession will in time render it much more free than it now is; from those who disgrace it: at present such persons remain, and it would not be difficult to give instances of neglect, cruelty, oppression, and chicanery; nor are they by any means confined to one part of the country. Quacks and imposters are indeed in every profession, as well with a licence as without one. The character and actions of Swallow might doubtless be contrasted by the delineation of an able and upright solicitor; but this letter is of sufficient length, and such persons, without question, are already known to my readers.

LETTER VII.

Finirent multi letho mala; credula vitam
Spes alit, et melius cras fore semper ait.—TIBULLUS.

He fell to juggle, cant, and cheat .....
For as those fowls that live in water
Are never wet, he did but smatter;
Whate'er he labour'd to appear,
His understanding still was clear.
A paltry wretch he had, half-starved,
That him in place of zany served.—BUTLER'S *Hudibras*.

PROFESSIONS—PHYSIC.

The Worth and Excellence of the true Physician—Merit, not the sole Cause of Success—Modes of advancing Reputation—Motives of medical Men for publishing their Works—The great Evil of Quackery—Present State of advertising Quacks—Their Hazard—Some fail, and why—Causes of Success—How Men of understanding are prevailed upon to have recourse to Empirics, and to permit their Names to be advertised—Evils of Quackery: to nervous Females: to Youth: to Infants—History of an advertising Empiric, &c.

NEXT, to a graver tribe we turn our view,
And yield the praise to worth and science due;
But this with serious words and sober style,
For these are friends with whom we seldom smile:[1]
Helpers of men[2] they 're call'd, and we confess
Theirs the deep study, theirs the lucky guess;
We own that numbers join with care and skill,
A temperate judgment, a devoted will:
Men who suppress their feelings, but who feel
The painful symptoms they delight to heal;[3]

[1] [Original edition:—
From Law to Physic, stepping at our ease,
We find a way to finish—by degrees;
Forgive the quibble, and in graver style,
We 'll sing of these with whom we seldom smile.]

[2] Opiferque per orbem dicor.

[3] ["I feel not in me those sordid and unchristian desires of my profession. I do not secretly implore and wish for plagues, rejoice at famines, revolve ephemerides and almanacks in expectation of malignant effects, fatal conjunctions, and eclipses; I rejoice not at unwholesome springs, nor unseasonable winters; my prayer goes with the husband-

Patient in all their trials, they sustain
The starts of passion, the reproach of pain;
With hearts affected, but with looks serene,
Intent they wait through all the solemn scene;
Glad if a hope should rise from nature's strife,
To aid their skill and save the lingering life;
But this must virtue's generous effort be,
And spring from nobler motives than a fee:
To the Physician of the Soul, and these,
Turn the distress'd for safety, hope, and ease.[4]
But as physicians of that nobler kind
Have their warm zealots, and their sectaries blind;
So among these for knowledge most renowned,
Are dreamers strange, and stubborn bigots found:
Some, too, admitted to this honour'd name,
Have, without learning, found a way to fame;
And some by learning—young physicians write,
To set their merit in the fairest light;
With them a treatise in a bait that draws
Approving voices—'t is to gain applause,
And to exalt them in the public view,
More than a life of worthy toil could do.
When 't is proposed to make the man renown'd,
In every age, convenient doubts abound;
Convenient themes in every period start,
Which he may treat with all the pomp of art;
Curious conjectures he may always make,
And either side of dubious questions take;
He may a system broach, or, if he please,
Start new opinions of an old disease:
Or may some simple in the woodland trace,
And be its patron, till it runs its race;
As rustic damsels from their woods are won,
And live in splendour till their race be run;
It weighs not much on what their powers be shown,
When all his purpose is to make them known.
To show the world what long experience gains,
Requires not courage, though it calls for pains;
But at life's outset to inform mankind,
Is a bold effort of a valiant mind.[5]
The great good man, for noblest cause displays
What many labours taught, and many days;
These sound instruction from experience give,
The others show us how they mean to live.
That they have genius, and they hope mankind
Will to its efforts be no longer blind.
There are, beside, whom powerful friends advance,
Whom fashion favours, person, patrons, chance:
And merit sighs to see a fortune made
By daring rashness or by dull parade.
But these are trifling evils; there is one
Which walks uncheck'd, and triumphs in the sun:
There was a time, when we beheld the Quack,
On public stage, the licensed trade attack;
He made his labour'd speech with poor parade,
And then a laughing zany lent him aid:
Smiling we pass'd him, but we felt the while
Pity so much, that soon we ceased to smile;
Assured that fluent speech and flow'ry vest
Disguised the troubles of a man distress'd;—
But now our Quacks are gamesters, and they play
With craft and skill to ruin and betray;
With monstrous promise they delude the mind,
And thrive on all that tortures human-kind.
Void of all honour, avaricious, rash,
The daring tribe compound their boasted trash—
Tincture or syrup, lotion, drop or pill;
All tempt the sick to trust the lying bill;[6]
And twenty names of cobblers turn'd to squires,
Aid the bold language of these blushless liars.
There are among them those who cannot read,
And yet they 'll buy a patent, and succeed;
Will dare to promise dying sufferers aid,
For who, when dead, can threaten or upbraid?
With cruel avarice still they recommend
More draughts, more syrup, to the journey's end:
"I feel it not;"—"Then take it every hour:"
"It makes me worse;"—"Why then it shows its power:"
"I fear to die;"—"Let not your spirits sink,
"You 're always safe, while you believe and drink."

man's. I desire every thing in its proper season, that neither man nor the times be out of temper. Let me be sick myself if sometimes the malady of my patient be not a disease to me. I desire rather to cure his infirmities than my own necessities: where I do him no good, methinks it is no honest gain, though I confess it to be the worthy salary of our well-intended endeavours; I am not only ashamed, but heartily sorry, that, besides death, there are diseases incurable, yet not for mine own sake, but for the general cause and sake of humanity, whose common cause I apprehend as mine own."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.]

[4] ["I esteem it the office of a physician not only to restore health, but to mitigate pain and dolours; and not only when such mitigation may conduce to recovery, but when it may serve to make a fair and easy passage; for it is no small felicity which Augustus Cæsar was wont to wish to himself, that same 'euthanasia;' and what was specially noted in the death of Antoninus Pius, whose death was after the fashion and semblance of a kindly and pleasant sleep. So it is written of Epicurus, that, after his disease was judged desperate, he drowned his stomach and senses with a large draught and ingurgitation of wine; whereupon the epigram was made:—

'Hinc Stygias ebrius hausit aquas.'

He was not sober enough to taste any bitterness of the Stygian water. But the physicians, contrariwise, do make a kind of simple religion to stay with the patient after the disease is disclosed; whereas, in my judgment, they ought both to inquire the skill, and to give the attendances, for the facilitating and assuaging of the pains and agonies of death."—BACON.]

[5] When I observe that the young and less experienced physician will write rather with a view of making himself known than to investigate and publish some useful fact, I would not be thought to extend this remark to all the publications of such men. I could point out a work containing experiments the most judicious, and conclusions the most interesting, made by a gentleman, then young, which would have given just celebrity to a man after long practice. The observation is nevertheless true: many opinions have been adopted, and many books written, not that the theory might be well defended, but that a young physician might be better known. [The gentleman here alluded to is Dr. Edmund Goodwyn. He was assistant-surgeon to Mr. Page of Woodbridge when the Poet was apprentice there, and published, in 1788, an 'Experimental Enquiry into the Effects of Submersion, Strangulation, and several Kinds of noxious Airs on Living Animals.']

[6] ["I have heard of a porter, who serves as a knight of the post under one of these operators, and, though he was never sick in his life, has been cured of all the diseases in the dispensary. These are the men whose sagacity has invented elixirs of all sorts, pills, and lozenges, and take it as an affront if you come to them before you are given over by everybody else. Their medicines are infallible, and never fail of success—that is, of enriching the doctor, and setting the patient effectually at rest."—*BISHOP PEARCE.*]

How strange to add, in this nefarious trade,
That men of parts are dupes by dunces made:[7]
That creatures, nature meant should clean our streets,
Have purchased lands and mansions, parks and seats;
Wretches with conscience so obtuse, they leave
Their untaught sons their parents to deceive;
And when they 're laid upon their dying-bed,
No thought of murder comes into their head,
Nor one revengeful ghost to them appears,
To fill the soul with penitential fears.
Yet not the whole of this imposing train
Their gardens, seats, and carriages obtain;
Chiefly, indeed, they to the robbers fall,
Who are most fitted to disgrace them all:
But there is hazard—patents must be bought,
Venders and puffers for the poison sought;
And then in many a paper through the year,
Must cures and cases, oaths and proofs appear;
Men snatch'd from graves, as they were dropping in,
Their lungs cough'd up, their bones pierced through their skin;
Their liver all one schirrus, and the frame
Poison'd with evils which they dare not name;
Men who spent all upon physicians' fees,
Who never slept, nor had a moment's ease,
Are now as roaches sound, and all as brisk as bees.[8]
If the sick gudgeons to the bait attend,
And come in shoals, the angler gains his end;
But should the advertising cash be spent,
Ere yet the town has due attention lent,
Then bursts the bubble, and the hungry cheat
Pines for the bread he ill deserves to eat;
It is a lottery, and he shares perhaps
The rich man's feast, or begs the pauper's scraps.

From powerful causes spring th' empiric's gains,
Man's love of life, his weakness, and his pains;
These first induce him the vile trash to try,
Then lend his name, that other men may buy:
This love of life, which in our nature rules,
To vile imposture makes us dupes and tools;[9]
Then pain compels th' impatient soul to seize
On promised hopes of instantaneous ease;
And weakness too with every wish complies,
Worn out and won by importunities.
Troubled with something in your bile or blood,
You think your doctor does you little good;
And grown impatient, you require in haste
The nervous cordial, nor dislike the taste;
It comforts, heals, and strengthens; nay, you think
It makes you better every time you drink;
"Then lend your name"—you 're loth, but yet confess
Its powers are great, and so you acquiesce:
Yet think a moment, ere your name you lend,
With whose 't is placed, and what you recommend;
Who tipples brandy will some comfort feel,
But will he to the med'cine set his seal?
Wait, and you 'll find the cordial you admire
Has added fuel to your fever's fire:
Say, should a robber chance your purse to spare,
Would you the honour of the man declare?
Would you assist his purpose? swell his crime?
Besides, he might not spare a second time.
Compassion sometimes sets the fatal sign,
The man was poor, and humbly begg'd a line;
Else how should noble names and titles back
The spreading praise of some advent'rous quack?
But he the moment watches, and entreats
Your honour's name,—your honour joins the cheats;
You judged the med'cine harmless, and you lent
What help you could, and with the best intent;

[7] ["There is hardly a man in the world, one would think, so ignorant as not to know that the ordinary quack-doctors, who publish their great abilities in little brown billets, distributed to all who pass by, are to a man impostors and murderers. Yet such is the credulity of the vulgar, and the impudence of those professors, that the affair still goes on, and new promises, of what was never before done, are made every day. What aggravates the jest is, that even this promise has been made as long as the memory of man can trace it, yet nothing performed, and yet still prevails. As I was passing along to-day, a paper given into my hand, by a fellow without a nose, tells us as follows:—'In Russel Court, over against the Cannon Ball, at the Surgeons' Arms, in Drury Lane, is lately come from his travels a surgeon who hath practised surgery and physic, both by sea and land, these twenty-four years. He (by the blessing) cures the yellow-jaundice, scurvy, dropsy, surfeits, long sea-voyages, campaigns, lying-in, &c., as some people that *has* been lame these thirty years can testify: in short, he cureth all diseases incident to men, women, or children!' If a man could be so indolent as to look upon this havoc of the human species, which is made by vice and ignorance, it would be a good ridiculous work to comment upon the declaration of this accomplished traveller. There is something unaccountably taking among the vulgar in those who come from a great way off. Ignorant people of quality, as many there are of such, dote excessively that way. The ignorants of lower order, who cannot, like the upper ones, be profuse of their money to those recommended by coming from a distance, are no less complaisant than the others; for they venture their lives from the same admiration. But the art of managing mankind is only to make them stare a little, to keep up their astonishment, to let nothing be familiar to them, but ever to have something in their sleeve, in which they must think you are deeper than they are. There is a doctor in Mann Alley, near Wapping, who sets up for curing cataracts, upon the credit of having, as his bill sets forth, lost an eye in the emperor's service. His patients come in upon this, and he shows the muster-roll, which confirms that he was in his Imperial Majesty's troops; and he puts out their eyes with great success. Who would believe that a man should be a doctor for the cure of bursten children, by declaring that his father and grandfather were both bursten? Yet Charles Ingolston, next door to the Harp, in Barbican, has made a pretty penny by this operation."—STEELE.]

[8] [In an admirable section of the 'Miseries of Human Life,' a patient, now quite recovered, is made to describe himself as having been, before he met with his favourite *doctor*, "an ulcer rather than a man."]

[9] ["There would be no end of enumerating the several imaginary perfections, and unaccountable artifices, by which this tribe of men ensnare the minds of the vulgar, and gain crowds of admirers. I have seen the whole front of a mountebank's stage, from one end to the other, faced with patents, certificates, medals, and great seals, by which the several princes of Europe have testified their particular respect and esteem for the doctor. Every great man with a sounding title has been his patient. I believe I have seen twenty mountebanks that have given physic to the Czar of Muscovy. The great Duke of Tuscany escapes no better. The Elector of Brandenburgh was likewise a very good patient. The great condescension of the doctor draws upon him much good-will from his audience; and it is ten to one but, if any one of them be troubled with an aching tooth, his ambition will prompt him to get it drawn by a person who has had so many princes, kings, and emperors under his hands."—ADDISON.]

But can it please you, thus to league with all
Whom he can beg or bribe to swell the scrawl?
Would you these wrappers with your name adorn,
Which hold the poison for the yet unborn?
No class escapes them—from the poor man's pay,
The nostrum takes no trifling part away:
See! these square patent bottles from the shop,
Now decoration to the cupboard's top;
And there a favourite hoard you'll find within,
Companions meet! the julep and the gin.
Time too with cash is wasted; 't is the fate
Of real helpers to be call'd too late;
This find the sick, when (time and patience gone)
Death with a tenfold terror hurries on.
Suppose the case surpasses human skill,
There comes a quack to flatter weakness still;
What greater evil can a flatterer do,
Than from himself to take the sufferer's view?
To turn from sacred thoughts his reasoning powers,
And rob a sinner of his dying hours?
Yet this they dare, and craving to the last,
In hope's strong bondage hold their victim fast:
For soul or body no concern have they,
All their inquiry, "Can the patient pay?
"And will he swallow draughts until his dying day?"
Observe what ills to nervous females flow,
When the heart flutters, and the pulse is low;
If once induced these cordial sips to try,
All feel the ease, and few the danger fly;
For, while obtain'd, of drams they 've all the force,
And when denied, then drams are the resource.
Nor these the only evils—there are those
Who for the troubled mind prepare repose;
They write: the young are tenderly address'd,
Much danger hinted, much concern express'd;
They dwell on freedoms lads are prone to take,
Which makes the doctor tremble for their sake;
Still if the youthful patient will but trust
In one so kind, so pitiful, and just;
If he will take the tonic all the time,
And hold but moderate intercourse with crime;
The sage will gravely give his honest word,
That strength and spirits shall be both restored;
In plainer English—if you mean to sin,
Fly to the drops, and instantly begin.
Who would not lend a sympathising sigh,
To hear yon infant's pity-moving cry?
That feeble sob, unlike the new-born note,
Which came with vigour from the op'ning throat;
When air and light first rush'd on lungs and eyes,
And there was life and spirit in the cries;
Now an abortive, faint attempt to weep,
Is all we hear; sensation is asleep:
The boy was healthy, and at first express'd
His feelings loudly when he fail'd to rest;
When cramm'd with food, and tighten'd every limb,
To cry aloud, was what pertain'd to him;
Then the good nurse, (who, had she borne a brain,
Had sought the cause that made her babe complain,)
Has all her efforts, loving soul! applied
To set the cry, and not the cause, aside;
She gave her powerful sweet without remorse,
The sleeping cordial—she had tried its force,
Repeating oft: the infant, freed from pain,
Rejected food, but took the dose again,
Sinking to sleep; while she her joy express'd,
That her dear charge could sweetly take his rest:
Soon may she spare her cordial; not a doubt
Remains, but quickly he will rest without.
This moves our grief and pity, and we sigh
To think what numbers from these causes die;
But what contempt and anger should we show,
Did we the lives of these impostors know!
Ere for the world's I left the cares of school,
One I remember who assumed the fool;
A part well suited—when the idler boys
Would shout around him, and he loved the noise;
They called him Neddy;—Neddy had the art
To play with skill his ignominious part;
When he his trifles would for sale display,
And act the mimic for a schoolboy's pay.
For many years he plied his humble trade,
And used his tricks and talents to persuade;
The fellow barely read, but chanced to look
Among the fragments of a tatter'd book;
Where, after many efforts made to spell
One puzzling word, he found it *oxymel*;
A potent thing, 't was said to cure the ills
Of ailing lungs—the *oxymel of squills*:
Squills he procured, but found the bitter strong
And most unpleasant; none would take it long;
But the pure acid and the sweet would make
A med'cine numbers would for pleasure take.
There was a fellow near, an artful knave,
Who knew the plan, and much assistance gave;
He wrote the puffs, and every talent plied
To make it sell: it sold, and then he died.
Now all the profit fell to Ned's control,
And Pride and Avarice quarrell'd for his soul;
When mighty profits by the trash were made,
Pride built a palace, Avarice groan'd and paid;
Pride placed the signs of grandeur all about,
And Avarice barr'd his friends and children out.
Now see him Doctor! yes, the idle fool,
The butt, the robber of the lads at school;
Who then knew nothing, nothing since acquired,
Became a doctor, honour'd and admired;
His dress, his frown, his dignity were such,
Some who had known him thought his knowledge much;
Nay, men of skill, of apprehension quick,
Spite of their knowledge, trusted him when sick;
Though he could neither reason, write, nor spell,
They yet had hope his trash would make them well;
And while they scorn'd his parts, they took his oxymel.
Oh! when his nerves had once received a shock,
Sir Isaac Newton might have gone to Rock:[10]
Hence impositions of the grossest kind,
Hence thought is feeble, understanding blind;
Hence sums enormous by those cheats are made,
And deaths unnumber'd by their dreadful trade.[11]

[10] An empiric who *flourished* at the same time with this great man.

[11] ["So great are the difficulties of tracing out the hidden causes of the evils to which the frame of man is subject, that the most candid of the profession have ever allowed and lamented how unavoidably they are in the dark. So that the best medicines, administered by the wisest heads, shall often do the mischief they were intended to prevent. These are misfortunes to which we are subject in this state of darkness;

Alas! in vain is my contempt express'd,
To stronger passions are their words address'd;
To pain, to fear, to terror their appeal,
To those who, weakly reasoning, strongly feel.
What then our hopes?—perhaps there may by law
Be method found, these pests to curb and awe;
Yet in this land of freedom law is slack
With any being to commence attack;
Then let us trust to science—there are those
Who can their falsehoods and their frauds disclose,
All their vile trash detect, and their low tricks expose;
Perhaps their numbers may in time confound
Their arts—as scorpions give themselves the wound:
For when these curers dwell in every place,
While of the cured we not a man can trace,
Strong truth may then the public mind persuade,
And spoil the fruits of this nefarious trade.

LETTER VIII.

Non possidentem multa vocaveris
Recte beatum: rectius occupat
Nomen Beati, qui Deorum
Muneribus sapienter uti,
Duramque callet pauperiem pati.
HOR. lib. iv. *Ode* 9.[1]

Non propter vitam faciunt patrimonia quidam,
Sed vitio cæci propter patrimonia vivant.
JUVENAL, *Sat.* 12.[2]

TRADES.

No extensive manufactories in the Borough; yet considerable Fortunes made there—Ill Judgment of Parents in disposing of their Sons—The best educated not the most likely to succeed—Instance—Want of Success compensated by the lenient Power of some Avocations—the Naturalist—The Weaver an Entomologist, &c.—A Prize Flower—Story of Walter and William.

Or manufactures, trade, inventions rare,
Steam-towers and looms, you'd know our Borough's share—
'T is small: we boast not these rich subjects here,
Who hazard thrice ten thousand pounds a year;
We've no huge buildings, where incessant noise
Is made by springs and spindles, girls and boys;
Where, mid such thundering sounds, the maiden's song
Is "Harmony in Uproar"[3] all day long.

Still common minds with us in common trade,
Have gain'd more wealth than ever student made;
And yet a merchant, when he gives his son
His college-learning, thinks his duty done;
A way to wealth he leaves his boy to find,
Just when he 's made for the discovery blind.
Jones and his wife perceived their elder boy
Took to his learning, and it gave them joy;
This they encouraged, and were bless'd to see
Their son a fellow with a high degree;
A living fell, he married, and his sire
Declared 't was all a father could require;
Children then bless'd them, and when letters came,
The parents proudly told each grandchild's name.
Meantime the sons at home in trade were placed,
Money their object—just the father's taste;
Saving he lived and long, and when he died,
He gave them all his fortune to divide:
"Martin," said he, "at vast expense was taught;
"He gain'd his wish, and has the ease he sought."
Thus the good priest (the Christian scholar!) finds
What estimate is made by vulgar minds;
He sees his brothers, who had every gift
Of thriving, now assisted in their thrift;
While he whom learning, habits, all prevent,
Is largely mulct for each impediment.
Yet let us own that Trade has much of chance,
Not all the careful by their care advance;
With the same parts and prospects, one a seat
Builds for himself; one finds it in the Fleet.
Then to the wealthy you will see denied
Comforts and joys that with the poor abide:
There are who labour through the year, and yet
No more have gain'd than—not to be in debt:
Who still maintain the same laborious course,
Yet pleasure hails them from some favourite source;
And health, amusements, children, wife, or friend,
With life's dull views their consolations blend.
Nor these alone possess the lenient power
Of soothing life in the desponding hour;
Some favourite studies, some delightful care,
The mind with trouble and distresses share;
And by a coin, a flower, a verse, a boat,
The stagnant spirits have been set afloat;
They pleased at first, and then the habit grew,
Till the fond heart-no higher pleasure knew;
Till, from all cares and other comforts freed,
Th' important nothing took in life the lead.
With all his phlegm, it broke a Dutchman's heart,
At a vast price, with one loved root to part;[4]

but when men without skill, without education, without knowledge either of the distemper, or even of what they sell, make merchandise of the miserable, and, from a dishonest principle, trifle with the pains of the unfortunate,—too often with their lives, and from the mere motive of a dishonest gain,—every such instance of a person bereft of life by the hand of ignorance can be considered in no other light than a murder."—STERNE.]

[1] ["Not he, of wealth immense possess'd,
Tasteless who piles his massy gold,
Among the number of the blest
Should have his glorious name enroll'd.
He better claims the glorious name, who knows
With wisdom to enjoy what Heaven bestows."
FRANCIS.]

[2] ["Few gain to live, Corvinus, few or none,
But, blind with avarice, live to gain alone."
GIFFORD.]

[3] The title of a short piece of humour, by Arbuthnot.

[4] The tulip mania prevailed, in 1637, to such an extent in Holland, that a single root has been sold for five thousand florins, together with a new carriage, two grey horses, and a complete harness. The tulips, however, were seldom de-

And toys like these fill many a British mind,
Although their hearts are found of firmer kind.
Oft have I smiled the happy pride to see
Of humble tradesmen, in their evening glee;
When of some pleasing fancied good possess'd,
Each grew alert, was busy, and was bless'd:
Whether the call-bird yield the hour's delight,[5]
Or, magnified in microscope, the mite;
Or whether tumblers, croppers, carriers seize
The gentle mind, they rule it and they please.
There is my friend the Weaver; strong desires
Reign in his breast; 't is beauty he admires:
See! to the shady grove he wings his way,
And feels in hope the raptures of the day—
Eager he looks: and soon, to glad his eyes,
From the sweet bower, by nature form'd, arise
Bright troops of virgin moths and fresh-born butterflies;
Who broke that morning from their half-year's sleep,
To fly o'er flowers where they were wont to creep.
Above the sovereign oak, a sovereign skims,
The purple Emp'ror, strong in wing and limbs:
There fair Camilla takes her flight serene,
Adonis blue, and Paphia silver-queen;
With every filmy fly from mead or bower,
And hungry Sphinx who threads the honey'd flower;
She o'er the Larkspur's bed, where sweets abound,
Views ev'ry bell, and hums th' approving sound;
Poised on her busy plumes, with feeling nice
She draws from every flower, nor tries a floret twice.
He fears no bailiff's wrath, no baron's blame,
His is untax'd and undisputed game:
Nor less the place of curious plant he knows;[6]
He both his Flora and his Fauna shows:
For him is blooming in its rich array
The glorious flower which bore the palm away;
In vain a rival tried his utmost art,
His was the prize, and joy o'erflow'd his heart.
"This, this! is beauty; cast, I pray, your eyes
"On this my *glory*! see the grace! the size!
"Was ever *stem* so tall, so stout, so strong,
"Exact in breadth, in just proportion long!
"These brilliant hues are all distinct and clean,
"No kindred tint, no blending streaks between:
"This in no shaded, run-off,[7] pin-eyed [8] thing;
"A king of flowers, a flower for England's king:
"I own my pride, and thank the favouring star
"Which shed such beauty on my fair Bizarre." [9]
Thus may the poor the cheap indulgence seize,
While the most wealthy pine and pray for ease;
Content not always waits upon success,
And more may he enjoy who profits less.
Walter and *William* took (their father dead)
Jointly the trade to which they both were bred;
When fix'd, they married, and they quickly found
With due success their honest labours crown'd:
Few were their losses, but although a few,
Walter was vex'd, and somewhat peevish grew:
"You put your trust in every pleading fool,"
Said he to William, and grew strange and cool.
"Brother, forbear," he answer'd; "take your due,
"Nor let my lack of caution injure you:"
Half friends they parted,—better so to close,
Than longer wait to part entirely foes.
Walter had knowledge, prudence, jealous care;
He let no idle views his bosom share;
He never thought nor felt for other men—
"Let one mind one, and all are minded then."
Friends he respected, and believed them just,
But they were men, and he would no man trust;
He tried and watch'd his people day and night,—
The good it harm'd not; for the bad 't was right:
He could their humours bear, nay disrespect,
But he could yield no pardon to neglect;
That all about him were of him afraid,
"Was right," he said—"so should we be obey'd."
These merchant-maxims, much good fortune too,
And ever keeping one grand point in view,
To vast amount his once small portion drew.
William was kind and easy; he complied
With all requests, or grieved when he denied;
To please his wife he made a costly trip,
To please his child he let a bargain slip;
Prone to compassion, mild with the distress'd,
He bore with all who poverty profess'd,
And some would he assist, nor one would he arrest.
He had some loss at sea, bad debts at land,
His clerk absconded with some bills in hand,
And plans so often fail'd, that he no longer plann'd.
To a small house (his brother's) he withdrew,
At easy rent—the man was not a Jew;
And there his losses and his cares he bore,
Nor found that want of wealth could make him poor.
No, he in fact was rich; nor could he move,
But he was follow'd by the looks of love;

livered. A nobleman bespoke of a merchant a tulip root, to be delivered in six months, at the price of a thousand florins. During these six months the price of that species of tulip must have risen or fallen, or remained as it was. But instead of demanding his tulip then, he paid or received the difference of price. This singular species of gaming could, from its nature, only go to a limited extent; the value of tulip roots began to fall. The sellers were then anxious to deliver the roots in natura, but the buyers would not receive them. The consequence was, that tulips fell very speedily to their *intrinsic* value, and the gambling was at an end.

5 Different birds require different sorts of calls; but they are mostly composed of a pipe or reed, with a little leathern purse or bag, somewhat in the form of a bellows, which, by the motion given thereto, yields a noise like that of the species of bird to be taken.

6 In botanical language "*the habitat*," the favourite soil or situation of the more scarce species.

7 This, it must be acknowledged, is contrary to the opinion of Thomson, and I believe of some other poets, who, in describing the varying hues of our most beautiful flowers, have considered them as lost and blended with each other; whereas their beauty, in the eye of a florist (and, I conceive, in that of the uninitiated also), depends upon the distinctness of their colours; the stronger the bounding line, and the less they break into the neighbouring tint, so much the richer and more valuable is the flower esteemed.

8 An auricula, or any other single flower, is so called when the *stigma* (the part which arises from the seed-vessel) is protruded beyond the tube of the flower, and becomes visible.

9 This word, so far as it relates to flowers, means those variegated with three or more colours irregularly and indeterminately.

All he had suffer'd, every former grief,
Made those around more studious in relief;
He saw a cheerful smile in every face,
And lost all thoughts of error and disgrace.
Pleasant it was to see them in their walk
Round their small garden, and to hear them talk;
Free are their children, but their love refrains
From all offence—none murmurs, none complains;
Whether a book amused them, speech or play,
Their looks were lively, and their hearts were gay;
There no forced efforts for delight were made,
Joy came with prudence, and without parade;
Their common comforts they had all in view,
Light were their troubles, and their wishes few:
Thrift made them easy for the coming day,
Religion took the dread of death away;
A cheerful spirit still ensured content,
And love smiled round them wheresoe'er they went.

Walter, meantime, with all his wealth's increase,
Gain'd many points, but could not purchase peace;
When he withdrew from business for an hour,
Some fled his presence, all confess'd his power;
He sought affection, but received instead
Fear undisguised, and love-repelling dread;
He look'd around him—"Harriet, dost thou love?"
"I do my duty," said the timid dove;
"Good Heav'n, your duty! prithee, tell me now—
"To love and honour—was not that your vow?
"Come, my good Harriet, I would gladly seek
"Your inmost thought—Why can't the woman speak?
"Have you not all things?"—"Sir, do I complain?"—
"No, that's my part, which I perform in vain;
"I want a simple answer, and direct—
"But you evade; yes! 't is as I suspect.
"Come then, my children! Watt! upon your knees
"Vow that you love me."—"Yes, sir, if you please."
"Again! By Heav'n, it mads me; I require
"Love, and they 'll do whatever I desire:
"Thus too my people shun me; I would spend
"A thousand pounds to get a single friend;
"I would be happy—I have means to pay
"For love and friendship, and you run away:
"Ungrateful creatures! why, you seem to dread
"My very looks; I know you wish me dead.
"Come hither, Nancy! you must hold me dear;
"Hither, I say; why! what have you to fear?
"You see I'm gentle—Come, you trifler, come:
"My God! she trembles!—Idiot, leave the room!
"Madam! your children hate me; I suppose
"They know their cue; you make them all my foes.
"I've not a friend in all the world—not one:
"I 'd be a bankrupt sooner; nay, 't is done;
"In every better hope of life I fail,
"You're all tormentors, and my house a jail.
"Out of my sight! I'll sit and make my will—
"What, glad to go? stay, devils, and be still;
"'T is to your Uncle's cot you wish to run,
"To learn to live at ease and be undone;
"Him you can love, who lost his whole estate,
"And I, who gain you fortunes, have your hate;
"'T is in my absence, you yourselves enjoy:
"Tom! are you glad to lose me? tell me, boy:
"Yes! does he answer?—Yes! upon my soul;
"No awe, no fear, no duty, no control!
"Away! away! ten thousand devils seize
"All I possess, and plunder where they please!
"What 's wealth to me?—yes, yes! it gives me sway,
"And you shall feel it—Go! begone, I say."[10]

LETTER IX.

Interpone tuis interdum gaudia curis
Ut possis animo quemvis sufferre laborem.
CATULL. *lib. 3.*

. . . . . Nostra fatiscat
Laxaturque chelys, vires instigat alitque
Tempestiva quies, major post otia virtus.
STATIUS, *Sylv.* lib. 4.

Jamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant;
Omnia pontus erant: deerant quoque littora ponto.
OVID. *Metamorph.* lib. 1.

AMUSEMENTS.

Common Amusements of a Bathing-place—Morning Rides, Walks, &c.—Company resorting to the Town—Different Choice of Lodgings—Cheap Indulgences—Sea-side Walks—Wealthy Invalid—Summer evening on the Sands—Sea Productions—"Water parted from the Sea"—Winter Views serene—In what cases to be avoided—Sailing upon the River—A small Islet of Sand off the Coast—Visited by Company—Covered by the Flowing of the Tide—Adventure in that place.

Or our Amusements ask you?—We amuse
Ourselves and friends with seaside walks and views,
Or take a morning ride, a novel, or the news;
Or, seeking nothing, glide about the street,
And so engaged, with various parties meet;
Awhile we stop, discourse of wind and tide,
Bathing and books, the raffle, and the ride:
Thus, with the aid which shops and sailing give,
Life passes on; 't is labour, but we live.
When evening comes, our invalids awake,
Nerves cease to tremble, heads forbear to ache;
Then chearful meals the sunken spirits raise,
Cards or the dance, wine, visiting, or plays.
Soon as the season comes, and crowds arrive,
To their superior rooms the wealthy drive;

[10] If I have in this letter praised the good-humour of a man confessedly too inattentive to business, and if, in the one on AMUSEMENTS, I have written somewhat sarcastically of "the brick-floored parlour which the butcher lets," be credit given to me, that, in the one case, I had no intention to apologise for idleness, nor any design in the other to treat with contempt the resources of the poor. The good-humour is considered as the consolation of disappointment; and the room is so mentioned because the lodger is vain. Most of my readers will perceive this: but I shall be sorry if by any I am supposed to make pleas for the vices of men, or treat their wants and infirmities with derision or with disdain.

Others look round for lodging snug and small,
Such is their taste—they 've hatred to a hall:
Hence one his fav'rite habitation gets,
The brick-floor'd parlour which the butcher lets;
Where, through his single light, he may regard
The various business of a common yard,
Bounded by backs of buildings form'd of clay,
By stable, sties, and coops, et cætera.

The needy-vain, themselves awhile to shun,
For dissipation to these dog-holes run;
Where each (assuming petty pomp) appears,
And quite forgets the shopboard and the shears.

For them are cheap amusements: they may slip
Beyond the town and take a private dip;
When they may urge that, to be safe they mean,
They 've heard there 's danger in a light machine;
They too can gratis move the quays about,
And gather kind replies to every doubt;
There they a pacing, lounging tribe may view,
The stranger's guides, who 've little else to do;
The Borough's placemen, where no more they gain
Than keeps them idle, civil, poor, and vain.
Then may the poorest with the wealthy look
On ocean, glorious page of Nature's book!
May see its varying views in every hour,
All softness now, then rising with all power,
As sleeping to invite, or threat'ning to devour:
'T is this which gives us all our choicest views;
Its waters heal us, and its shores amuse.[1]

See! those fair nymphs upon that rising strand,
Yon long salt lake has parted from the land;
Well pleased to press that path, so clean, so pure,
To seem in danger, yet to feel secure;
Trifling with terror, while they strive to shun
The curling billows; laughing as they run;
They know the neck that joins the shore and sea,
Or, ah! how changed that fearless laugh would be.

Observe how various Parties take their way,
By seaside walks, or make the sand-hills gay;
There group'd are laughing maids and sighing swains,
And some apart who feel unpitied pains;
Pains from diseases, pains which those who feel,
To the physician, not the fair, reveal:
For nymphs (propitious to the lover's sigh)
Leave these poor patients to complain and die.

Lo! where on that huge anchor sadly leans
That sick tall figure, lost in other scenes;
He late from India's clime impatient sail'd,
There, as his fortune grew, his spirits fail'd;
For each delight, in search of wealth he went,
For ease alone, the wealth acquired is spent—
And spent in vain; enrich'd, aggrieved, he sees
The envied poor possess'd of joy and ease:
And now he flies from place to place, to gain
Strength for enjoyment, and still flies in vain:
Mark! with what sadness, of that pleasant crew,
Boist'rous in mirth, he takes a transient view;
And fixing then his eye upon the sea,
Thinks what has been and what must shortly be:
Is it not strange that man should health destroy,
For joys that come when he is dead to joy?

Now is it pleasant in the Summer-eve,
When a broad shore retiring waters leave,
Awhile to wait upon the firm fair sand,
When all is calm at sea, all still at land;
And there the ocean's produce to explore,
As floating by, or rolling on the shore:
Those living jellies[2] which the flesh inflame,
Fierce as a nettle, and from that its name;
Some in huge masses, some that you may bring
In the small compass of a lady's ring;
Figured by hand divine—there 's not a gem
Wrought by man's art to be compared to them;
Soft, brilliant, tender, through the wave they glow,
And make the moonbeam brighter where they flow.
Involved in sea-wrack, here you find a race,
Which science doubting, knows not where to place;
On shell or stone is dropp'd the embryo-seed,[3]
And quickly vegetates a vital breed.[4]

While thus with pleasing wonder you inspect
Treasures the vulgar in their scorn reject,
See as they float along th' entangled weeds
Slowly approach, upborne on bladdery beads;
Wait till they land, and you shall then behold
The fiery sparks those tangled fronds infold,
Myriads of living points;[5] th' unaided eye
Can but the fire and not the form descry.
And now your view upon the ocean turn,
And there the splendour of the waves discern;
Cast but a stone, or strike them with an oar,
And you shall flames within the deep explore;
Or scoop the stream phosphoric as you stand,
And the cold flames shall flash along your hand;
When, lost in wonder, you shall walk and gaze
On weeds that sparkle, and on waves that blaze.[6]

[1] [Original edition:—

'T is this which gives us all our choicest views;
And dull the mind they never can amuse.]

[2] Some of the smaller species of the Medusa (sea-nettle) are exquisitely beautiful; their form is nearly oval, varied with serrated longitudinal lines; they are extremely tender, and by no means which I am acquainted with can be preserved, for they soon dissolve in either spirit of wine or water, and lose every vestige of their shape, and indeed of their substance: the larger species are found in misshapen masses of many pounds weight; these, when handled, have the effect of the nettle, and the stinging is often accompanied or succeeded by the more unpleasant feeling, perhaps in a slight degree resembling that caused by the torpedo.

[3] Various tribes and species of marine vermes are here meant; that which so nearly resembles a vegetable in its form, and perhaps, in some degree, manner of growth, is the coralline, called by naturalists Sertularia, of which there are many species in almost every part of the coast. The animal protrudes its many claws (apparently in search of prey) from certain pellucid vesicles, which proceed from a horny, tenacious, branchy stem.

[4] [The topics which this evening view on the sea-shore embraces have never, as far as we recollect, been so distinctly treated of in poetry; they are here recorded, too, in very appropriate numbers. The versification, of the latter part of the passage particularly, is brilliant and *éveillée*, and has something of the pleasing restlessness of the ocean itself.—GIFFORD.]

[5] These are said to be a minute kind of animal of the same class; when it does not shine, it is invisible to the naked eye.

[6] For the cause or causes of this phenomenon, which is sometimes, though rarely, observed on our coasts, I must refer the reader to the writers on philosophy and natural history. [There are few phenomena in nature much more striking than the luminous appearance exhibited by the water of the ocean, particularly in tempestuous weather; terrific, in particular, to landsmen in these cases, as it is resplendent and beautiful in the calms of summer. It has accordingly not

The ocean too has Winter views serene,
When all you see through densest fog is seen;
When you can hear the fishers near at hand
Distinctly speak, yet see not where they stand;
Or sometimes them and not their boat discern,
Or half-conceal'd some figure at the stern;
The view 's all bounded, and from side to side
Your utmost prospect but a few ells wide;
Boys who, on shore, to sea the pebble cast,
Will hear it strike against the viewless mast;
While the stern boatman growls his fierce disdain,
At whom he knows not, whom he threats in vain.

'T is pleasant then to view the nets float past,
Net after net till you have seen the last:
And as you wait till all beyond you slip,
A boat comes gliding from an anchor'd ship,
Breaking the silence with the dipping oar,
And their own tones, as labouring for the shore;
Those measured tones which with the scene agree,
And give a sadness to serenity.

All scenes like these the tender Maid should shun,
Nor to a misty beach in autumn run;
Much should she guard against the evening cold,
And her slight shape with fleecy warmth infold;
This she admits, but not with so much ease
Gives up the night-walk when th' attendants please:
Her have I seen, pale, vapour'd through the day,
With crowded parties at the midnight play;
Faint in the morn, no powers could she exert;
At night with Pam delighted and alert;
In a small shop she 's raffled with a crowd,
Breath'd the thick air, and cough'd and laugh'd aloud;
She who will tremble if her eye explore
"The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor;"
Whom the kind doctor charged, with shaking head,
At early hour to quit the beaux for bed;
She has, contemning fear, gone down the dance,
Till she perceived the rosy morn advance;
Then has she wonder'd, fainting o'er her tea,
Her drops and julep should so useless be:
Ah! sure her joys must ravish every sense,
Who buys a portion at such vast expense.

Among those joys, 't is one at eve to sail
On the broad River with a favourite gale;
When no rough waves upon the bosom ride,
But the keel cuts, nor rises on the tide;
Safe from the stream the nearer gunwale stands,
Where playful children trail their idle hands:
Or strive to catch long grassy leaves that float
On either side of the impeded boat;
What time the moon arising shows the mud,
A shining border to the silver flood:
When, by her dubious light, the meanest views,
Chalk, stones, and stakes, obtain the richest hues;
And when the cattle, as they gazing stand,
Seem nobler objects than when view'd from land:
Then anchor'd vessels in the way appear,
And sea-boys greet them as they pass—"What cheer?"
The sleeping shell-ducks at the sound arise,
And utter loud their unharmonious cries;
Fluttering they move their weedy beds among,
Or instant diving, hide their plumeless young.

Along the Wall, returning from the town,
The weary rustic homeward wanders down:
Who stops and gazes at such joyous crew,
And feels his envy rising at the view;
He the light speech and laugh indignant hears,
And feels more press'd by want, more vex'd by fears.

Ah! go in peace, good fellow, to thine home,
Nor fancy these escape the general doom:
Gay as they seem, be sure with them are hearts
With sorrow tried; there 's sadness in their parts:
If thou couldst see them when they think alone,
Mirth, music, friends, and these amusements gone;
Couldst thou discover every secret ill
That pains their spirit, or resists their will;
Couldst thou behold forsaken Love's distress,
Or Envy's pang at glory and success,
Or Beauty, conscious of the spoils of Time,
Or Guilt alarm'd when Memory shows the crime;
All that gives sorrow, terror, grief, and gloom;
Content would cheer thee trudging to thine home.[7]

There are, 't is true, who lay their cares aside,
And bid some hours in calm enjoyment glide;
Perchance some fair one to the sober night
Adds (by the sweetness of her song) delight;
And as the music on the water floats,
Some bolder shore returns the soften'd notes;
Then, youth, beware, for all around conspire
To banish caution and to wake desire;
The day's amusement, feasting, beauty, wine,
These accents sweet and this soft hour combine,
When most unguarded, then to win that heart of thine:
But see, they land! the fond enchantment flies,
And in its place life's common views arise.

Sometimes a Party, row'd from town will land
On a small islet form'd of shelly sand,
Left by the water when the tides are low,
But which the floods in their return o'erflow:

only been an object of much remark among common observers, but has excited the attention of naturalists at all times, so as to have led to much discussion. From the time of Pliny downwards, frequent inquiries have been made respecting the cause, and accordingly many different theories have been proffered. It was long taken for granted that this property belonged to the water itself, not to any bodies contained in it. Mayer, and others who followed him, considered that this phenomenon depended on the same cause as the light emitted by the diamond and other substances after exposure to the sun's rays. Others were content with calling the light phosphoric, and with supposing that sea-water was endowed with the property of phosphorescence. Another party attributed the light to the putrefaction of sea-water, although it was not explained what the connecti n was between putrefaction and phosphorescence. The experiments of Dr. Hulme made a nearer approximation to the true cause, by showing that the luminous secretion or matter attached to the mucus of certain fishes was diffusible in water. Later or more accurate naturalists, and seamen also, have, however, observed that some marine worms and insects were luminous; and thus it was admitted that some, at least, of the luminous appearances of the sea might be produced by these; but to Dr. MacCulloch we are indebted for having first brought the whole of this question into one clear point of view, in his work on the Western Islands of Scotland, and for so great an extension of the luminous property to the marine species, as to have erected this into a general law.—BREWSTER.]

[7] This is not offered as a reasonable source of contentment, but as one motive for resignation. There would not be so much envy if there were more discernment.

There will they anchor, pleased awhile to view
The watery waste, a prospect wild and new;
The now receding billows give them space,
On either side the growing shores to pace;
And then returning, they contract the scene,
Till small and smaller grows the walk between;
As sea to sea approaches, shore to shores,
Till the next ebb the sandy isle restores.

Then what alarm! what danger and dismay,
If all their trust, their boat should drift away;
And once it happen'd—Gay the friends advanced,
They walk'd, they ran, they play'd, they sang, they danced;
The urns were boiling, and the cups went round,
And not a grave or thoughtful face was found;
On the bright sand they trod with nimble feet,
Dry shelly sand that made the summer-seat;
The wondering mews flew fluttering o'er the head,
And waves ran softly up their shining bed.

Some form'd a party from the rest to stray,
Pleased to collect the trifles in their way;
These to behold they call their friends around,
No friends can hear, or hear another sound;
Alarm'd, they hasten, yet perceive not why,
But catch the fear that quickens as they fly.

For lo! a lady sage, who paced the sand
With her fair children, one in either hand,
Intent on home, had turn'd, and saw the boat
Slipp'd from her moorings, and now far afloat;
She gazed, she trembled, and though faint her call,
It seem'd, like thunder, to confound them all.
Their sailor-guides, the boatman and his mate,
Had drank, and slept regardless of their state:
"Awake!" they cried aloud; "Alarm the shore!
"Shout all, or never shall we reach it more!"
Alas! no shout the distant land can reach,
Nor eye behold them from the foggy beach:
Again they join in one loud powerful cry,
Then cease, and eager listen for reply;
None came—the rising wind blew sadly by:
They *shout* once more, and then they turn aside,
To see how quickly flow'd the coming tide;
Between each cry they find the waters steal
On their strange prison, and new horrors feel;
Foot after foot on the contracted ground
The billows fall, and dreadful is the sound;
Less and yet less the sinking isle became,
And there was wailing, weeping, wrath, and blame.

Had one been there, with spirit strong and high,
Who could observe, as he prepared to die,
He might have seen of hearts the varying kind,
And traced the movement of each different mind:
He might have seen, that not the gentle maid
Was more than stern and haughty man afraid;
Such, calmly grieving, will their fears suppress,
And silent prayers to Mercy's throne address;
While fiercer minds, impatient, angry, loud,
Force their vain grief on the reluctant crowd:
The party's patron, sorely sighing, cried,
"Why would you urge me? I at first denied."
Fiercely they answer'd, "Why will you complain,
"Who saw no danger, or was warn'd in vain?"

A few essay'd the troubled soul to calm,
But dread prevail'd, and anguish and alarm.

Now rose the water through the lessening sand,
And they seem'd sinking while they yet could stand.
The sun went down, they look'd from side to side,
Nor aught except the gathering sea descried;
Dark and more dark, more wet, more cold it grew,
And the most lively bade to hope adieu;
Children by love then lifted from the seas,
Felt not the waters at the parents' knees,
But wept aloud; the wind increased the sound,
And the cold billows as they broke around.

"Once more, yet once again, with all our strength,
"Cry to the land—we may be heard at length."
Vain hope if yet unseen! but hark! an oar,
That sound of bliss! comes dashing to their shore;
Still, still the water rises; "Haste!" they cry,
"Oh! hurry, seamen; in delay we die:"
(Seamen were these, who in their ship perceived
The drifted boat, and thus her crew relieved.)
And now the keel just cuts the cover'd sand,
Now to the gunwale stretches every hand:
With trembling pleasure all confused embark,
And kiss the tackling of their welcome ark;
While the most giddy, as they reach the shore,
Think of their danger, and their GOD adore.

LETTER X.

Non iter lances mensasque nitentes,
Cum stupet insanis acies fulgoribus, et cum
Acclinis falsis animus meliora recusat;
Verum hic impransi mecum disquirite.
HOR. *Sat.* ii. lib. 2.[1]

O prodiga rerum
Luxuries, nunquam parvo contenta paratu,
Et quæsitorum terra pelagoque ciborum
Ambitiosa fames, et lautæ gloria mensæ.
LUCAN. lib. 4.[2]

CLUBS AND SOCIAL MEETINGS.

Desire of Country Gentlemen for Town Associations—Book-clubs—Too much of literary Character expected from them—Literary Conversation prevented; by Feasting, by Cards—Good, notwithstanding, results—Card-club with Eagerness resorted to—Players—Umpires at the Whist Table—Petulances of Temper there discovered — Free-and-Easy Club; not perfectly easy or free—Freedom, how interrupted—The superior Member—Termination of the Evening—Drinking and Smoking Clubs—The Midnight Conversation of the delaying Members—Society of the poorer Inhabitants; its Use; gives Pride and Consequence to the humble Character—Pleasant Habitations of the frugal Poor—Sailor returning to his Family—Freemasons' Club—The Mystery—What its Origin—Its professed Advantages—Griggs and Gregorians — A Kind of Masons — Reflections on these various Societies.

You say you envy in your calm retreat
Our social Meetings;—'t is with joy we meet

[1] ["Let 's talk, my friends, but talk before we dine,
Not when a gilt buffet's reflected pride
Turns on from sound philosophy aside;
Not when from plate to plate your eyeballs roll,
And the brain dances to the mantling bowl."
POPE'S *Imit.*]

[2] ["Behold! ye sons of luxury, behold!
Who scatter in excess your lavish gold;
You who the wealth of *frugal* ages waste
T' indulge a wanton supercilious taste;
For whom all earth, all ocean are explored,
To spread the various proud voluptuous board."—ROWE.]

In these our parties you are pleased to find
Good sense and wit, with intercourse of mind;
Composed of men who read, reflect, and write,
Who, when they meet, must yield and share delight.
To you our Book-club has peculiar charm,
For which you sicken in your quiet farm;
Here you suppose us at our leisure placed,
Enjoying freedom, and displaying taste:
With wisdom cheerful, temperately gay,
Pleased to enjoy, and willing to display.
If thus your envy gives your ease its gloom,
Give wings to fancy, and among us come.
We're now assembled; you may soon attend—
I'll introduce you—"Gentlemen, my friend."
"Now are you happy? you have pass'd a night
"In gay discourse, and rational delight."
"Alas! not so: for how can mortals think,
"Or thoughts exchange, if thus they eat and drink?
"No! I confess when we had fairly dined,
"That was no time for intercourse of mind;
"There was each dish prepared with skill t' invite,
"And to detain the struggling appetite;
"On such occasions minds with one consent
"Are to the comforts of the body lent;
"There was no pause—the wine went quickly round,
"Till struggling Fancy was by Bacchus bound;
"Wine is to wit as water thrown on fire,
"By duly sprinkling both are raised the higher;
"Thus largely dealt, the vivid blaze they choke,
"And all the genial flame goes off in smoke."
"But when no more your boards these loads contain,
"When wine no more o'erwhelms the labouring brain,
"But serves, a gentle stimulus; we know
"How wit must sparkle, and how fancy flow."
It might be so, but no such club-days come;
We always find these dampers in the room:
If to converse were all that brought us here,
A few odd members would in turn appear;
Who dwelling nigh, would saunter in and out,
O'erlook the list, and toss the books about;
Or yawning read them, walking up and down,
Just as the loungers in the shops in town;
Till fancying nothing would their minds amuse,
They'd push them by, and go in search of news.
But our attractions are a stronger sort,
The earliest dainties and the oldest port;
All enter then with glee in every look,
And not a member thinks about a book.
Still, let me own, there are some vacant hours,
When minds might work, and men exert their powers:
Ere wine to folly spurs the giddy guest,
But gives to wit its vigour and its zest;
Then might we reason, might in turn display
Our several talents, and be wisely gay;
We might—but who a tame discourse regards,
When Whist is named, and we behold the Cards?
We from that time are neither grave nor gay;
Our thought, our care, our business is to play:
Fix'd on these spots and figures, each attends
Much to his partners, nothing to his friends.
Our public cares, the long, the warm debate,
That kept our patriots from their beds so late;
War, peace, invasion, all we hope or dread,
Vanish like dreams when men forsake their bed;
And groaning nations and contending kings
Are all forgotten for these painted things:
Paper and paste, vile figures and poor spots,
Level all minds, philosophers and sots;
And give an equal spirit, pause, and force,
Join'd with peculiar diction, to discourse:
"Who deals?—you led—we 're three by cards—had you
"Honour in hand?"—"Upon my honour, two."
Hour after hour, men thus contending sit,
Grave without sense, and pointed without wit.
Thus it appears these envied Clubs possess
No certain means of social happiness;
Yet there 's a good that flows from scenes like these—
Man meets with man at leisure and at ease;
We to our neighbours and our equals come,
And rub off pride that man contracts at home;
For there, admitted master, he is prone
To claim attention and to talk alone:
But here he meets with neither son nor spouse;
No humble cousin to his bidding bows;
To his raised voice his neighbours' voices rise,
To his high look as lofty look replies;
When much he speaks, he finds that ears are closed,
And certain signs inform him when he 's prosed;
Here all the value of a listener know,
And claim, in turn, the favour they bestow.
No pleasure gives the speech, when all would speak,
And all in vain a civil hearer seek.
To chance alone we owe the free discourse,
In vain you purpose what you cannot force;
'T is when the favourite themes unbidden spring,
That fancy soars with such unwearied wing;
Then may you call in aid the moderate glass,
But let it slowly and unprompted pass;
So shall there all things for the end unite,
And give that hour of rational delight.
Men to their Clubs repair, themselves to please,
To care for nothing, and to take their ease;
In fact, for play, for wine, for news they come:
Discourse is shared with friends or found at home.
But Cards with Books are incidental things;
We 've nights devoted to these queens and kings:
Then if we choose the social game, we may;
Now 't is a duty, and we 're bound to play;
Nor ever meeting of the social kind
Was more engaging, yet had less of mind.
Our eager parties, when the lunar light
Throws its full radiance on the festive night,
Of either sex, with punctual hurry come,
And fill, with one accord, an ample room;
Pleased, the fresh packs on cloth of green they see,
And seizing, handle with preluding glee;
They draw, they sit, they shuffle, cut and deal;
Like friends assembled, but like foes to feel:
But yet not all,—a happier few have joys
Of mere amusement, and their cards are toys;
No skill nor art, nor fretful hopes have they,
But while their friends are gaming, laugh and play.
Others there are, the veterans of the game,
Who owe their pleasure to their envied fame;
Through many a year, with hard-contested strife,
Have they attain'd this glory of their life:

Such is that ancient burgess, whom in vain
Would gout and fever on his couch detain;
And that large lady, who resolves to come,
Though a first fit has warn'd her of her doom!
These are as oracles: in every cause
They settle doubts, and their decrees are laws;
But all are troubled, when, with dubious look,
Diana questions what Apollo spoke.
Here avarice first, the keen desire of gain,
Rules in each heart, and works in every brain;
Alike the veteran-dames and virgins feel,
Nor care what greybeards or what striplings deal;
Sex, age, and station, vanish from their view,
And gold, their sov'reign good, the mingled crowd pursue.
Hence they are jealous, and as rivals, keep
A watchful eye on the beloved heap;
Meantime discretion bids the tongue be still,
And mild-good-humour strives with strong ill-will
Till prudence fails; when, all impatient grown,
They make their grief, by their suspicions, known.
"Sir, I protest, were Job himself at play,
"He 'd rave to see you throw your cards away;
"Not that I care a button—not a pin
"For what I lose; but we had cards to win:
"A saint in heaven would grieve to see such hand
"Cut up by one who will not understand."
"Complain of me! and so you might indeed
"If I had ventured on that foolish lead,
"That fatal heart—but I forgot your play—
"Some folk have ever thrown their hearts away."
"Yes, and their diamonds; I have heard of one
"Who made a beggar of an only son."
"Better a beggar, than to see him tied
"To art and spite, to insolence and pride."
"Sir, were I you, I 'd strive to be polite,
"Against my nature, for a single night."
"So did you strive, and, madam! with success;
"I knew no being we could censure less!"[3]
Is this too much? alas! my peaceful Muse
Cannot with half their virulence abuse.[4]
And hark! at other tables discord reigns,
With feign'd contempt for losses and for gains;
Passions awhile are bridled; then they rage,
In waspish youth, and in resentful age;[5]
With scraps of insult—"Sir, when next you play,
"Reflect whose money 't is you throw away.
"No one on earth can less such things regard,
"But when one's partner doesn't know a card—
"I scorn suspicion, ma'am, but while you stand
"Behind that lady, pray keep down your hand."
"Good heav'n, revoke? remember, if the set
"Be lost, in honour you should pay the debt."
"There, there 's your money; but, while I have life,
"I 'll never more sit down with man and wife;
"They snap and snarl indeed, but in the heat
"Of all their spleen, their understandings meet,
"They are Freemasons, and have many a sign,
"That we, poor devils! never can divine:
"May it be told, do ye divide th' amount,
"Or goes it all to family account?"[6]

Next is the Club, where to their friends in town
Our country neighbours once a month come down;
We term it *Free-and-Easy*, and yet we
Find it no easy matter to be free:
E'en in our small assembly, friends among,
Are minds perverse, there 's something will be wrong;
Men are not equal; some will claim a right
To be the kings and heroes of the night;
Will their own favourite themes and notions start,
And you must hear, offend them, or depart.
There comes Sir Thomas from his village-seat,
Happy, he tells us, all his friends to meet;
He brings the ruin'd brother of his wife,
Whom he supports, and makes him sick of life;
A ready witness whom he can produce
Of all his deeds—a butt for his abuse;
Soon as he enters, has the guests espied,
Drawn to the fire, and to the glass applied—
"Well, what 's the subject?—what are you about?
"The news, I take it—come, I 'll help you out:"—
And then, without one answer he bestows
Freely upon us all he hears and knows;
Gives us opinions, tells us how he votes,
Recites the speeches, adds to them his notes;
And gives old ill-told tales for new-born anecdotes:
Yet cares he nothing what we judge or think,
Our only duty 's to attend and drink:
At length, admonish'd by his gout he ends
The various speech, and leaves at peace his friends;
But now, alas! we 've lost the pleasant hour,
And wisdom flies from wine's superior power.
Wine, like the rising sun, possession gains,
And drives the mist of dulness from the brains;
The gloomy vapour from the spirit flies,
And views of gaiety and gladness rise:

[3] [Original edition:—
"Against this nature they might show their skill
With small success, who 're maids against their will."]

[4] ["The common humour of all gamesters is, whilst they win, to be always jovial, merry, good-natured, and free; but, on the contrary, if they lose even the smallest trifle, a single hit at backgammon, or a dealing at cards for twopence a game, they are so choleric and testy, that they frequently break into violent passions, utter the most impious oaths and horrid imprecations, and become so mad that no man dare speak to them. But, alas! they have in general, especially if their stakes be large and excessive, more occasion to regret their winning than losing: for, as Seneca truly observes, their gains are not 'munera fortunæ, sed insidiæ;' not fortune's gifts, but misfortune's baits to lead them on to their common catastrophe, beggary and ruin."—BURTON.]

[5] It is probable, that really polite people, with cultivated minds and harmonious tempers, may judge this description of a Card-club conversation to be highly exaggerated, if not totally fictitious; and I acknowledge that the club must admit a particular kind of members to afford such specimens of acrimony and objurgation; yet that such language is spoken, and such manners exhibited, is most certain, chiefly among those who, being successful in life, without previous education, not very nice in their feelings, or very attentive to improprieties, sit down to game with no other view than that of adding the gain of the evening to the profits of the day; whom, therefore, disappointment itself makes angry, and, when caused by another, resentful and vindictive.

[6] [For an easy vein of ridicule, terse expression, and just strokes of character, this description of a Card Club is admirable. It is one of those likenesses which, without knowing the original, we may pronounce to be perfect. In another tone of verse, but equally happy, is the Club of Smokers.—GIFFORD.]

Still it proceeds; till from the glowing heat,
The prudent calmly to their shades retreat:—
Then is the mind o'ercast—in wordy rage
And loud contention angry men engage;
Then spleen and pique, like fireworks thrown in spite,
To mischief turn the pleasures of the night;
Anger abuses, Malice loudly rails,
Revenge awakes, and Anarchy prevails:
Till wine, that raised the tempest, makes it cease,
And maudlin Love insists on instant peace;
He, noisy mirth and roaring song commands,
Gives idle toasts, and joins unfriendly hands:
Till fuddled Friendship vows esteem and weeps,
And jovial Folly drinks and sings and sleeps.

A Club there is of *Smokers*—Dare you come
To that close, clouded, hot, narcotic room?
When, midnight past, the very candles seem
Dying for air, and give a ghastly gleam;
When curling fumes in lazy wreaths arise,
And prosing topers rub their winking eyes;
When the long tale, renew'd when last they met,
Is spliced anew, and is unfinish'd yet;
When but a few are left the house to tire,
And they half sleeping by the sleepy fire;
E'en the poor ventilating vane that flew
Of late so fast, is now grown drowsy too;
When sweet, cold, clammy punch its aid bestows,
Then thus the midnight conversation flows:—
"Then, as I said, and—mind me—as I say,
"At our last meeting—you remember"—"Ay?"
"Well, very well—then freely as I drink
"I spoke my thought—you take me—what I think,
"And, sir, said I, if I a freeman be,
"It is my bounden duty to be free."
"Ay, there you posed him: I respect the Chair,
"But man is man, although the man's a mayor;
"If Muggins live—no, no!—if Muggins die,
"He 'll quit his office—neighbour, shall I try?"
"I 'll speak my mind, for here are none but friends:
"They 're all contending for their private ends;
"No public spirit—once a vote would bring,
"I say a vote—was then a pretty thing;
"It made a man to serve his country and his king:
"But for that place, that Muggins must resign,
"You 've my advice—'t is no affair of mine."

The Poor Man has his Club: he comes and spends
His hoarded pittance with his chosen friends;
Nor this alone,—a monthly dole he pays,
To be assisted when his health decays;
Some part his prudence, from the day's supply,
For cares and troubles in his age, lays by;
The printed rules he guards with painted frame,
And shows his children where to read his name:
Those simple words his honest nature move,
That bond of union tied by laws of love;
This is his pride, it gives to his employ
New value, to his home another joy;
While a religious hope its balm applies
For all his fate inflicts, and all his state denies.[7]

Much would it please you, sometimes to explore
The peaceful dwellings of our Borough poor:
To view a sailor just return'd from sea,
His wife beside; a child on either knee,
And others crowding near, that none may lose
The smallest portion of the welcome news;
What dangers pass'd, "when seas ran mountains high,
"When tempest raved, and horrors veil'd the sky;
"When prudence fail'd, when courage grew dismay'd,
"When the strong fainted, and the wicked pray'd,—
"Then in the yawning gulf far down we drove,
"And gazed upon the billowy mount above;
"Till up that mountain, swinging with the gale,
"We view'd the horrors of the watery vale."
The trembling children look with steadfast eyes,
And, panting, sob involuntary sighs:
Soft sleep awhile his torpid touch delays,
And all is joy and piety and praise.

Masons are ours, *Freemasons*—but, alas!
To their own bards I leave the mystic class:
In vain shall one, and not a gifted man,
Attempt to sing of this enlightened clan:
I know no Word, boast no directing Sign,
And not one Token of the race is mine;
Whether with Hiram, that wise widow's son,
They came from Tyre to royal Solomon,
Two pillars raising by their skill profound,
Boaz and Jachin through the East renown'd:
Whether the sacred Books their rise express,
Or books profane, 't is vain for me to guess:
It may be lost in date remote and high,
They know not what their own antiquity:
It may be, too, derived from cause so low,
They have no wish their origin to show:
If, as Crusaders, they combined to wrest
From heathen lords the land they long possess'd;
Or were at first some harmless club, who made
Their idle meetings solemn by parade;
Is but conjecture—for the task unfit,
Awe-struck and mute, the puzzling theme I quit:
Yet, if such blessings from their Order flow,
We should be glad their moral code to know;
Trowels of silver are but simple things,
And Aprons worthless as their apron-strings;
But if indeed you have the skill to teach
A social spirit, now beyond our reach;
If man's warm passions you can guide and bind,
And plant the virtues in the wayward mind;
If you can wake to Christian love the heart,—
In mercy, something of your powers impart.
But, as it seems, we Masons must become
To know the Secret, and must then be dumb;
And as we venture for uncertain gains,
Perhaps the profit is not worth the pains.
When Bruce, that dauntless traveller, thought he stood
On Nile's first rise, the fountain of the flood,

7 [The poor man's club, which partakes of the nature of a friendly society, is described with that good-hearted indulgence which marks all Mr. Crabbe's writings.—JEFFREY.]

And drank exulting in the sacred spring,
The critics told him it was no such thing;
That springs unnumber'd round the country ran,
But none could show him where the first began:
So might we feel, should we our time bestow,
To gain these Secrets and these Signs to know;
Might question still if all the truth we found,
And firmly stood upon the certain ground;
We might our title to the Mystery dread,
And fear we drank not at the river-head.

Griggs and *Gregorians* here their meeting hold,
Convivial Sects, and *Bucks* alert and bold;
A kind of Masons, but without their sign;
The bonds of union—pleasure, song, and wine.
Man, a gregarious creature, loves to fly
Where he the trackings of the herd can spy;
Still to be one with many he desires,
Although it leads him through the thorns and briers.
A few! but few there are, who in the mind
Perpetual source of consolation find:
The weaker many to the world will come,
For comforts seldom to be found from home.
When the faint hands no more a brimmer hold,
When flannel-wreaths the useless limbs infold,
The breath impeded, and the bosom cold;
When half the pillow'd man the palsy chains,
And the blood falters in the bloated veins,—
Then, as our friends no further aid supply
Than hope's cold phrase and courtesy's soft sigh,
We should that comfort for ourselves ensure,
Which friends could not, if we could friends procure.
Early in life, when we can laugh aloud,
There 's something pleasant in a social crowd,
Who laugh with us—but will such joy remain,
When we lie struggling on the bed of pain?
When our physician tells us with a sigh,
No more on hope and science to rely,
Life's staff is useless then; with labouring breath
We pray for Hope divine—the staff of Death;—
This is a scene which few companions grace,
And where the heart's first favourites yield their place.
Here all the aid of man to man must end,
Here mounts the soul to her eternal Friend:
The tenderest love must here its tie resign,
And give th' aspiring heart to love divine.
Men feel their weakness, and to numbers run,
Themselves to strengthen, or themselves to shun;
But though to this our weakness may be prone,
Let 's learn to live, for we must die, alone.

1 "Sing, heavenly Muse!
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,
A shilling, breeches and chimeras dire."
PHILIPS's *Splendid Shilling*.

2 "Lend me thy clarion, Goddess! let me try
To sound the praise of merit ere it dies,

LETTER XI.

All the comforts of life in a Tavern are known,
'T is his home who possesses not one of his own;
And to him who has rather too much of that one,
'T is the house of a friend where he 's welcome to run;
The instant you enter my door you 're my Lord,
With whose taste and whose pleasure I 'm proud to accord;
And the louder you call, and the longer you stay,
The more I am happy to serve and obey.

To the house of a friend if you 're pleased to retire,
You must all things admit, you must all things admire;
You must pay with observance the price of your treat,
You must eat what is praised, and must praise what you eat;
But here you may come, and no tax we require,
You may loudly condemn what you greatly admire;
You may growl at our wishes and pains to excel,
And may snarl at the rascals who please you so well.

At your wish we attend, and confess that your speech
On the nation's affairs might the minister teach;
His views you may blame, and his measures oppose,
There 's no Tavern-treason—you 're under the Rose;
Should rebellions arise in your own little state,
With me you may safely their consequence wait;
To recruit your lost spirits 't is prudent to come,
And to fly to a friend when the devil 's at home.

That I 've faults is confess'd; but it won't be denied,
'T is my interest the faults of my neighbours to hide;
If I 've sometimes lent Scandal occasion to prate,
I 've often conceal'd what she lov'd to relate;
If to Justice's bar some have wander'd from mine,
'T was because the dull rogues wouldn't stay by their wine;
And for brawls at my house, well the poet explains,
That men drink *shallow draughts*, and so madden their brains.

INNS.

A difficult Subject for Poetry—Invocation of the Muse—Description of the principal Inn and those of the first Class—The large deserted Tavern—Those of a second Order—Their Company—One of particular Description—A lower kind of Public-Houses; yet distinguished among themselves—Houses on the Quays for Sailors—The Green Man; its Landlord, and the Adventure of his Marriage, &c.

MUCH do I need, and therefore will I ask,
A Muse to aid me in my present task;
For then with special cause we beg for aid,
When of our subject we are most afraid:
INNS are this subject—'t is an ill-drawn lot,
So, thou who gravely triflest, fail me not;
Fail not, but haste, and to my memory bring
Scenes yet unsung, which few would choose to sing:
Thou mad'st a Shilling splendid;[1] thou hast thrown
On humble themes the graces all thine own;
By thee the Mistress of a Village-school
Became a queen enthroned upon her stool;[2]
And far beyond the rest thou gav'st to shine
Belinda's Lock—that deathless work was thine.[3]
Come, lend thy cheerful light, and give to please,
These seats of revelry, these scenes of ease;

Such as I oft have chanced to espy
Lost in the dreary shades of dull obscurity."
SHENSTONE's *Schoolmistress*.

3 "This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name."
POPE's *Rape of the Lock*.

Who sings of Inns much danger has to dread,
And needs assistance from the fountain-head.
High in the street, o'erlooking all the place,
The rampant *Lion* shows his kingly face;
His ample jaws extend from side to side,
His eyes are glaring, and his nostrils wide;
In silver shag the sovereign form is dress'd,
A mane horrific sweeps his ample chest;
Elate with pride, he seems t' assert his reign,
And stands the glory of his wide domain.
Yet nothing dreadful to his friends the sight,
But sign and pledge of welcome and delight.
To him the noblest guest the town detains
Flies for repast, and in his court remains;
Him too the crowd with longing looks admire,
Sigh for his joys, and modestly retire;
Here not a comfort shall to them be lost
Who never ask or never feel the cost.
The ample yards on either side contain
Buildings where order and distinction reign;—
The splendid carriage of the wealthier guest,
The ready chaise and driver smartly dress'd;
Whiskeys and gigs and curricles are there,
And high-fed prancers many a raw-boned pair.
On all without a lordly host sustains
The care of empire, and observant reigns;
The parting guest beholds him at his side,
With pomp obsequious, bending in his pride;
Round all the place his eyes all objects meet,
Attentive, silent, civil, and discreet.
O'er all within the lady-hostess rules,
Her bar she governs, and her kitchen schools;
To every guest th' appropriate speech is made,
And every duty with distinction paid;
Respectful, easy, pleasant, or polite—
"Your honour's servant"—"Mister Smith, good night."[4]
Next, but not near, yet honour'd through the town,
There swing, incongruous pair! the Bear and Crown:
That Crown suspended gems and ribands deck,
A golden chain hangs o'er that furry neck:
Unlike the nobler beast, the Bear is bound,
And with the Crown so near him, scowls uncrown'd;
Less his dominion, but alert are all
Without, within, and ready for the call;
Smart lads and light run nimbly here and there,
Not for neglected duties mourns the Bear.
To his retreats, on the Election-day,
The losing party found their silent way;
There they partook of each consoling good,
Like him uncrown'd, like him in sullen mood—
Threat'ning, but bound.—Here meet a social kind,
Our various clubs for various cause combined;
Nor has he pride, but thankful takes as gain
The dew-drops shaken from the Lion's mane:
A thriving couple here their skill display,
And share the profits of no vulgar sway.
Third in our Borough's list appears the sign
Of a fair queen—the gracious Caroline;
But in decay—each feature in the face
Has stain of Time, and token of disgrace.
The storm of winter, and the summer-sun,
Have on that form their equal mischief done;
The features now are all disfigured seen,
And not one charm adorns th' insulted queen:[5]
To this poor face was never paint applied,
Th' unseemly work of cruel Time to hide;
Here we may rightly such neglect upbraid,
Paint on such faces is by prudence laid.
Large the domain, but all within combine
To correspond with the dishonour'd sign;
And all around dilapidates; you call—
But none replies—they 're inattentive all:
At length a ruin'd stable holds your steed,
While you through large and dirty rooms proceed,
Spacious and cold; a proof they once had been
In honour,—now magnificently mean;
Till in some small half-furnish'd room you rest,
Whose dying fire denotes it had a guest.
In those you pass'd, where former splendour reign'd,
You saw the carpets torn, the paper stain'd;
Squares of discordant glass in windows fix'd,
And paper oil'd in many a space betwixt;
A soil'd and broken sconce, a mirror crack'd,
With table underprop'd, and chairs new back'd;
A marble side-slab with ten thousand stains,
And all an ancient Tavern's poor remains.
With much entreaty, they your food prepare,
And acid wine afford, with meagre fare;
Heartless you sup; and when a dozen times
You 've read the fractured window's senseless rhymes,
Have been assured that Phœbe Green was fair,
And Peter Jackson took his supper there;
You reach a chilling chamber, where you dread
Damps, hot or cold, from a tremendous bed;
Late comes your sleep, and you are waken'd soon
By rustling tatters of the old festoon.
O'er this large building, thus by time defaced,
A servile couple has its owner placed,
Who not unmindful that its style is large,
To lost magnificence adapt their charge:
Thus an old beauty, who has long declined,
Keeps former dues and dignity in mind;
And wills that all attention should be paid
For graces vanish'd and for charms decay'd.
Few years have pass'd, since brightly 'cross the way,
Lights from each window shot the lengthen'd ray,
And busy looks in every face were seen,
Through the warm precincts of the reigning Queen;
There fires inviting blazed, and all around
Was heard the tinkling bells' seducing sound;
The nimble waiters to that sound from far
Sprang to the call, then hasten'd to the bar;
Where a glad priestess of the temple sway'd,
The most obedient, and the most obey'd;
Rosy and round, adorn'd in crimson vest,
And flaming ribands at her ample breast:
She, skill'd like Circe, tried her guests to move,
With looks of welcome and with words of love;
And such her potent charms, that men unwise
Were soon transform'd and fitted for the sties.

[4] [The White Lion is one of the principal inns at Aldborough. The landlord shows, with no little exultation, an old-fashioned parlour, the usual scene of convivial meetings, in which the poet had his share. See *antè*, p. 30.]

[5] [Original edition:—

Have, like the guillotine, the royal neck
Parted in twain—the figure is a wreck.]

Her port in bottles stood, a well-stain'd row,
Drawn for the evening from the pipe below;
Three powerful spirits filled a parted case,
Some cordial bottles stood in secret place;
Fair acid-fruits in nets above were seen,
Her plate was splendid, and her glasses clean;
Basins and bowls were ready on the stand,
And measures clatter'd in her powerful hand.
Inferior Houses now our notice claim,
But who shall deal them their appropriate fame?
Who shall the nice, yet known distinction, tell,
Between the peel complete and single Bell?
Determine ye, who on your shining nags
Wear oil-skin beavers, and bear seal-skin bags;
Or ye, grave topers, who with coy delight
Snugly enjoy the sweetness of the night;
Ye Travellers all, superior Inns denied
By moderate purse, the low by decent pride;
Come and determine,—will you take your place
At the *full* Orb, or *half* the lunar Face?
With the Black-Boy or Angel will ye dine?
Will ye approve the Fountain or the Vine?
Horses the *white* or *black* will ye prefer?
The Silver-Swan or Swan opposed to her—
Rare bird![6] whose form the raven-plumage decks,
And graceful curve her three alluring necks?
All these a decent entertainment give,
And by their comforts comfortably live.
Shall I pass by the Boar?—there are who cry,
"Beware the Boar," and pass determined by:
Those dreadful tusks, those little peering eyes
And churning chaps, are tokens to the wise.
There dwells a kind old Aunt, and there you see
Some kind young Nieces in her company;
Poor village nieces, whom the tender dame
Invites to town, and gives their beauty Fame;
The grateful sisters feel th' important aid,
And the good Aunt is flatter'd and repaid.
What, though it may some cool observers strike,
That such fair sisters should be so unlike;
That still another and another comes,
And at the matron's tables smiles and blooms;
That all appear as if they meant to stay
Time undefined, nor name a parting day;
And yet, though all are valued, all are dear,
Causeless, they go, and seldom more appear.
Yet let Suspicion hide her odious head,
And Scandal vengeance from a burgess dread;
A pious friend, who with the ancient dame
At sober cribbage takes an evening game;
His cup beside him, through their play he quaffs,
And oft renews, and innocently laughs;
Or growing serious, to the text resorts,
And from the Sunday-sermon makes reports;
While all, with grateful glee, his wish attend,
A grave protector and a powerful friend:
But Slander says, who indistinctly sees,
Once he was caught with Sylvia on his knees;—
A cautious burgess with a careful wife
To be so caught!—'t is false upon my life.
Next are a lower kind, yet not so low
But they, among them, their distinctions know;
And when a thriving landlord aims so high,
As to exchange the Chequer for the Pye,
Or from Duke William to the Dog repairs,
He takes a finer coat and fiercer airs.
Pleased with his power, the poor man loves to say
What favourite Inn shall share his evening's pay;
Where he shall sit the social hour, and lose
His past day's labours and his next day's views.
Our Seamen too have choice; one takes a trip
In the warm cabin of his favourite Ship;
And on the morrow in the humbler Boat
He rows till fancy feels herself afloat;
Can he the sign—Three Jolly Sailors—pass,
Who hears a fiddle and who sees a lass?
The Anchor too affords the seaman joys,
In small smoked room, all clamour, crowd, and noise;
Where a curved settle half surrounds the fire,
Where fifty voices purl and punch require;
They come for pleasure in their leisure hour,
And they enjoy it to their utmost power;
Standing they drink, they swearing smoke, while all
Call, or make ready for a second call:
There is no time for trifling—"Do ye see?
"We drink and drub the French extempore."
See! round the room, on every beam and balk,
Are mingled scrolls of hieroglyphic chalk;
Yet nothing heeded—would one stroke suffice
To blot out all, here honour is too nice,—
"Let knavish landsmen think such dirty things,
"We 're British tars, and British tars are kings."
But the Green-Man shall I pass by unsung,
Which mine own *James* upon his sign-post hung?
His sign his image,—for he was once seen
A squire's attendant, clad in keeper's green;
Ere yet with wages more, and honour less,
He stood behind me in a graver dress.
James in an evil hour went forth to woo
Young *Juliet Hart*, and was her Romeo:
They 'd seen the play, and thought it vastly sweet
For two young lovers by the moon to meet;
The nymph was gentle, of her favours free,
E'en at a word—no Rosalind was she;
Nor, like that other Juliet, tried his truth
With—"Be thy purpose marriage, gentle youth?"
But him received, and heard his tender tale
When sang the lark, and when the nightingale:
So in few months the generous lass was seen
I' the way that all the Capulets had been.
Then first repentance seized the amorous man,
And—shame on love!—he reason'd and he ran;
The thoughtful Romeo trembled for his purse,
And the sad sounds, "for better and for worse."
Yet could the Lover not so far withdraw,
But he was haunted both by Love and Law;
Now Law dismay'd him as he view'd its fangs,
Now Pity seized him for his Juliet's pangs;
Then thoughts of justice and some dread of jail,
Where all would blame him, and where none might bail;
These drew him back, till Juliet's hut appear'd,
Where love had drawn him when he should have fear'd.
There sat the father in his wicker throne,
Uttering his curses in tremendous tone:
With foulest names his daughter he reviled,
And look'd a very Herod at the child:
Nor was she patient, but with equal scorn,
Bade him remember when his Joe was born:

[6] "Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno."—Juv.

Then rose the mother, eager to begin
Her plea for frailty, when the swain came in.
To him she turn'd, and other theme began,
Show'd him his boy, and bade him be a man;
" An honest man, who, when he breaks the laws,
" Will make a woman honest if there's cause."
With lengthen'd speech she proved what came to pass
Was no reflection on a loving lass:
" If she your love as wife and mother claim,
" What can it matter which was first the name?
" But 't is most base, 't is perjury and theft,
" When a lost girl is like a widow left;
" The rogue who ruins—" here the father found
His spouse was treading on forbidden ground.
" That's not the point," quoth he,—" I don't suppose
" My good friend Fletcher to be one of those;
" What's done amiss he 'll mend in proper time—
" I hate to hear of villany and crime:
" 'T was my misfortune, in the days of youth,
" To find two lasses pleading for my truth;
" The case was hard, I would with all my soul
" Have wedded both, but law is our control;
" So one I took, and when we gain'd a home,
" Her friend agreed—what could she more?—to come;
" And when she found that I 'd a widow'd bed,
" Me, she desired—what could I less?—to wed.
" An easier case is yours: you 've not the smart
" That two fond pleaders cause in one man's heart.
" You 've not to wait from year to year distress'd,
" Before your conscience can be laid at rest;
" There smiles your bride, there sprawls your new-born son,
" —A ring, a licence, and the thing is done."—
" My loving James,"—the Lass began her plea,
" I 'll make thy reason take a part with me;
" Had I been froward, skittish, or unkind,
" Or to thy person or thy passion blind;
" Had I refused, when 't was thy part to pray,
" Or put thee off with promise and delay;
" Thou might'st in justice and in conscience fly,
" Denying her who taught thee to deny:
" But, James, with me thou hadst an easier task,
" Bonds and conditions I forbore to ask;
" I laid no traps for thee, no plots or plans,
" Nor marriage named by licence or by banns;
" Nor would I now the parson's aid employ,
" But for this cause,"—and up she held her boy.
Motives like these could heart of flesh resist?
James took the infant and in triumph kiss'd;
Then to his mother's arms the child restored,
Made his proud speech and pledged his worthy word.

" Three times at church our banns shall publish'd be,
" Thy health be drunk in bumpers three times three;
" And thou shalt grace (bedeck'd in garments gay)
" The christening-dinner on the wedding-day."
James at my door then made his parting bow,
Took the Green-Man, and is a master now.[7]

LETTER XII.

These are monarchs none respect,
Heroes, yet an humbled crew,
Nobles, whom the crowd correct,
Wealthy men, whom duns pursue;
Beauties shrinking from the view
Of the day's detecting eye;
Lovers, who with much ado
Long-forsaken damsels woo,
And heave the ill-feign'd sigh.

These are misers, craving means
Of existence through the day,
Famous scholars, conning scenes
Of a dull bewildering play;
Ragged beaux and misses grey,
Whom the rabble praise and blame
Proud and mean, and sad and gay,
Toiling after ease, are they,
Infamous,[1] and boasting fame.

PLAYERS.

They arrive in the Borough—Welcomed by their former Friends—Are better fitted for Comic than Tragic Scenes: yet better approved in the latter by one Part of their Audience — Their general Character and Pleasantry — Particular Distresses and Labours—Their Fortitude and Patience—A private rehearsal—The Vanity of the aged Actress—A Heroine from the Milliner's Shop—A deluded Tradesman—Of what Persons the Company is composed—Character and Adventures of Frederic Thompson.

Drawn by the annual call, we now behold
Our Troop Dramatic, heroes known of old,
And those, since last they march'd, enlisted and enroll'd:
Mounted on hacks or borne in waggons some,
The rest on foot (the humbler brethren) come.[2]
Three favour'd places, an unequal time,
Join to support this company sublime:
Ours for the longer period—see how light
Yon parties move, their former friends in sight,
Whose claims are all allow'd, and friendship glads the night.
Now public rooms shall sound with words divine,
And private lodgings hear how heroes shine;

7 If this Letter should be found to contain nothing interesting or uncommon; if it describe things which we behold every day, and some which we do not wish to behold at any time; let it be considered that it is one of the shortest, and that, from a poem whose subject was a Borough, populous and wealthy, these places of public accommodation could not, without some impropriety, be excluded.

1 Strolling players are thus held in a legal sense.

2 " The strolling tribe, a despicable race!
Like wand'ring Arabs, shift from place to place:
Vagrants by law, to justice open laid,
They tremble, of the beadle's lash afraid,
And, fawning, cringe for wretched means of life
To Madam Mayoress, or his Worship's wife.
The mighty monarch, in theatric sack
Carries his whole regalia at his back;
His royal consort heads the female band,
And leads the heir-apparent in her hand;
The pannier'd ass creeps on with conscious pride,
Bearing a future prince on either side."—Churchill.

No talk of pay shall yet on pleasure steal,
But kindest welcome bless the friendly meal;
While o'er the social jug and decent cheer,
Shall be described the fortunes of the year.
Peruse these bills, and see what each can do,—
Behold! the prince, the slave, the monk, the Jew;
Change but the garment, and they 'll all engage
To take each part, and act in every age:
Cull'd from all houses, what a house are they!
Swept from all barns, our Borough-critics say;
But with some portion of a critic's ire,
We all endure them; there are some admire:
They might have praise, confined to farce alone;
Full well they grin, they should not try to groan;
But then our servants' and our seamen's wives
Love all that rant and rapture as their lives;
He who 'Squire Richard's part could well sustain,[3]
Finds as King Richard he must roar amain—
"My horse! my horse!"—Lo! now to their abodes,[4]
Come lords and lovers, empresses and gods.
The master-mover of these scenes has made
No trifling gain in this adventurous trade;
Trade we may term it, for he duly buys
Arms out of use and undirected eyes:
These he instructs, and guides them as he can,
And vends each night the manufactured man:
Long as our custom lasts they gladly stay,
Then strike their tents, like Tartars! and away!
The place grows bare where they too long remain,
But grass will rise ere they return again.
Children of Thespis, welcome; knights and queens!
Counts! barons! beauties! when before your scenes,
And mighty monarchs thund'ring from your throne;
Then step behind, and all your glory 's gone:
Of crown and palace, throne and guards bereft,
The pomp is vanish'd, and the care is left.[5]
Yet strong and lively is the joy they feel,
When the full house secures the plenteous meal;
Flatt'ring and flatter'd, each attempts to raise
A brother's merits for a brother's praise:
For never hero shows a prouder heart,
Than he who proudly acts a hero's part;
Nor without cause; the boards, we know, can yield
Place for fierce contest, like the tented field.
Graceful to tread the stage, to be in turn
The prince we honour, and the knave we spurn;
Bravely to bear the tumult of the crowd,
The hiss tremendous, and the censure loud:
These are their parts,—and he who these sustains,
Deserves some praise and profit for his pains.
Heroes at least of gentler kind are they,
Against whose swords no weeping widows pray,
No blood their fury sheds, nor havoc marks their way.
Sad happy race! soon raised and soon depress'd,
Your days all pass'd in jeopardy and jest;
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
Not warn'd by misery, not enrich'd by gain;
Whom Justice, pitying, chides from place to place,
A wandering, careless, wretched, merry race,
Whose cheerful looks assume, and play the parts
Of happy rovers with repining hearts;[6]
Then cast off care, and in the mimic pain
Of tragic woe feel spirits light and vain,
Distress and hope—the mind's, the body's wear,
The man's affliction, and the actor's tear:
Alternate times of fasting and excess
Are yours, ye smiling children of distress.
Slaves though ye be, your wandering freedom seems,
And with your varying views and restless schemes,
Your griefs are transient, as your joys are dreams.
Yet keen those griefs—ah! what avail thy charms,
Fair Juliet! what that infant in thine arms;
What those heroic lines thy patience learns,
What all the aid thy present Romeo earns,
Whilst thou 'art crowded in that lumbering wain,
With all thy plaintive sisters to complain?
Nor is there lack of labour,—To rehearse,
Day after day, poor scraps of prose and verse;
To bear each other's spirit, pride, and spite;
To hide in rant the heart-ache of the night;
To dress in gaudy patchwork, and to force
The mind to think on the appointed course;—
This is laborious, and may be defined
The bootless labour of the thriftless mind.
There is a veteran Dame: I see her stand
Intent and pensive with her book in hand;
Awhile her thoughts she forces on her part,
Then dwells on objects nearer to the heart;
Across the room she paces, gets her tone,
And fits her features for the Danish throne;
To-night a queen—I mark her motion slow,
I hear her speech, and Hamlet's mother know.
Methinks 't is pitiful to see her try
For strength of arms and energy of eye;
With vigour lost, and spirits worn away,
Her pomp and pride she labours to display;
And when awhile she 's tried her part to act,
To find her thoughts arrested by some fact;
When struggles more and more severe are seen,
In the plain actress than the Danish queen—
At length she feels her part, she finds delight,
And fancies all the plaudits of the night:

[3] [In Vanbrugh's comedy of 'The Provoked Husband.']

[4] ["It is true, indeed, that the principal actors on our rustic boards have most of them had their education in Covent Garden or Drury Lane; but they have been employed in the business of the drama in a degree but just above a scene-shifter. The attendants on a monarch strut monarchs themselves, mutes find their voices, and message-bearers rise into heroes. The humour of our best comedian consists in shrugs and grimaces; he jokes in a wry mouth, and repartees in a grin; in short, he practises on Congreve and Vanbrugh all those distortions that gained him so much applause from the galleries in the drubs which he was condemned to undergo in pantomimes."—THORNHILL.]

[5] "In shabby state they strut, in tatter'd robe,
The scene a blanket, and a barn the globe:
No high conceits their moderate wishes raise,
Content with humble profit, humble praise.
Let dowdies simper, and let bumpkins stare,
The strolling pageant hero treads on air:
Pleased for his hour he to mankind gives law,
And snores the next out on a bed of straw."
CHURCHILL.

[6] "He who to-night is seated on a throne,
Calls subjects, empires, kingdoms, all his own,
Who wears the diadem and regal robe,
Next morning shall awake as poor as Job."

Old as she is, she smiles at every speech,
And thinks no youthful part beyond her reach;
But as the mist of vanity again
Is blown away, by press of present pain,
Sad and in doubt she to her purse applies
For cause of comfort, where no comfort lies;
Then to her task she sighing turns again—
"Oh! Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain!"[7]

And who that poor, consumptive, wither'd thing,
Who strains her slender throat and strives to sing?
Panting for breath and forced her voice to drop,
And far unlike the inmate of the shop,
Where she, in youth and health, alert and gay,
Laugh'd off at night the labours of the day;
With novels, verses, fancy's fertile powers,
And sister-converse pass'd the evening-hours:
But Cynthia's soul was soft, her wishes strong,
Her judgment weak, and her conclusions wrong;
The morning-call and counter were her dread,
And her contempt the needle and the thread:
But when she read a gentle damsel's part,
Her woe, her wish!—she had them all by heart.

At length the hero of the boards drew nigh,
Who spake of love till sigh re-echo'd sigh;
He told in honey'd words his deathless flame,
And she his own by tender vows became;
Nor ring nor licence needed souls so fond,
Alfonso's passion was his Cynthia's bond:
And thus the simple girl, to shame betray'd,
Sinks to the grave forsaken and dismay'd.

Sick without pity, sorrowing without hope,
See her! the grief and scandal of the troop;
A wretched martyr to a childish pride,
Her woe insulted, and her praise denied:
Her humble talents, though derided, used,
Her prospects lost, her confidence abused;
All that remains—for she not long can brave
Increase of evils—is an early grave.

Ye gentle Cynthias of the shop, take heed
What dreams you cherish, and what books ye read!

A decent sum had *Peter Nottage* made,
By joining bricks—to him a thriving trade:
Of his employment master and his wife,
This humble tradesman led a lordly life;
The house of kings and heroes lack'd repairs,
And Peter, though reluctant, served the Players:
Connected thus, he heard in way polite,—
"Come, Master Nottage, see us play to-night."
At first 't was folly, nonsense, idle stuff,
But seen for nothing it grew well enough;
And better now—now best, and every night,
In this fool's paradise he drank delight;
And as he felt the bliss, he wish'd to know
Whence all this rapture and these joys could flow;
For if the seeing could such pleasure bring,
What must the feeling?—feeling like a king?

In vain his wife, his uncle, and his friend,
Cried—"Peter! Peter! let such follies end;
"'T is well enough these vagabonds to see,
"But would you partner with a showman be?"
"Showman!" said Peter, "did not Quin and Clive,
"And Roscius-Garrick, by the science thrive?
"Showman!—'t is scandal; I'm by genius led
"To join a class who 've Shakspeare at their head."

Poor Peter thus by easy steps became
A dreaming candidate for scenic fame,
And, after years consumed, infirm and poor,
He sits and takes the tickets at the door.

Of various men these marching troops are made,—
Pen-spurning clerks, and lads contemning trade;
Waiters and servants by confinement teased,
And youths of wealth by dissipation eased;
With feeling nymphs, who, such resource at hand,
Scorn to obey the rigour of command;
Some, who from higher views by vice are won,
And some of either sex by love undone;
The greater part lamenting as their fall,
What some an honour and advancement call.[8]

There are who names in shame or fear assume,
And hence our Bevilles and our Savilles come:
It honours him, from tailor's board kick'd down,
As Mister Dormer to amuse the town;
Falling, he rises: but a kind there are
Who dwell on former prospects, and despair;
Justly but vainly they their fate deplore,
And mourn their fall who fell to rise no more.

Our merchant *Thompson*, with his sons around,
Most mind and talent in his *Frederick* found:
He was so lively, that his mother knew,
If he were taught, that honour must ensue;
The father's views were in a different line,—
But if at college he were sure to shine.
Then should he go—to prosper who could doubt?—
When schoolboy stigmas would be all wash'd out,
For there were marks upon his youthful face,
'Twixt vice and error—a neglected case—
These would submit to skill; a little time,
And none could trace the error or the crime;
Then let him go, and once at college, he
Might choose his station—what would Frederick be?

'T was soon determined—He could not descend
To pedant-laws and lectures without end;
And then the chapel—night and morn to pray,
Or mulct and threaten'd if he kept away;
No! not to be a bishop—so he swore,
And at his college he was seen no more.

His debts all paid, the father, with a sigh,
Placed him in office—"Do, my Frederick, try:
"Confine thyself a few short months, and then—"
He tried a fortnight, and threw down the pen.

[7] [This was written, in 1799, soon after Mr. Crabbe had seen a rehearsal at the "Theatre Royal," Aldborough. The "veteran dame" was the lady manager, who, seated in her chair of state, corrected the rest, as far as her evidently abstracted attention would allow. Her husband enacted Othello, and shouted lustily for the "*handkercher*."]

[8] [The history of the stage might afford many instances of those who, in the trade of death, might have slain men, yet have condescended to deal counterfeit slaughter from their right hands, and administer harmless bowls of poison. We might read also of persons whose fists were intended to beat 'the drum ecclesiastic,' who have themselves become theatrical volunteers. In regard to the law, many who were originally designed to manifest their talents for elocution in Westminster Hall, have displayed them in Drury Lane; and it may be added, on theatrical authority, that—

"Not e'en Attorneys have this rage withstood,
But changed their pens for truncheons, ink for blood,
And, strange reverse!—died for their country's good."
THORNHILL.]

Again demands were hush'd: "My son, you 're free,
"But you 're unsettled; take your chance at sea:"
So in few days the midshipman, equipp'd,
Received the mother's blessing, and was shipp'd.
Hard was her fortune! soon compell'd to meet
The wretched stripling staggering through the street;
For, rash, impetuous, insolent and vain,
The captain sent him to his friends again:
About the Borough roved th' unhappy boy,
And ate the bread of every chance-employ!
Of friends he borrow'd, and the parents yet
In secret fondness authorised the debt;
The younger sister, still a child, was taught
To give with feign'd affright the pittance sought;
For now the father cried—"It is too late
"For trial more—I leave him to his fate,"—
Yet left him not: and with a kind of joy,
The mother heard of her desponding boy;
At length he sicken'd, and he found, when sick,
All aid was ready, all attendance quick;
A fever seized him, and at once was lost
The thought of trespass, error, crime, and cost:
Th' indulgent parents knelt beside the youth,
They heard his promise and believed his truth;
And when the danger lessen'd on their view,
They cast off doubt, and hope assurance grew;—
Nursed by his sisters, cherish'd by his sire,
Begg'd to be glad, encouraged to aspire,
His life, they said, would now all care repay,
And he might date his prospects from that day;
A son, a brother to his home received,
They hoped for all things, and in all believed.
And now will pardon, comfort, kindness draw
The youth from vice? will honour, duty, law?
Alas! not all: the more the trials lent,
The less he seem'd to ponder and repent;
Headstrong, determined in his own career,
He thought reproof unjust and truth severe;
The soul's disease was to its crisis come,
He first abused and then abjured his home;
And when he chose a vagabond to be,
He made his shame his glory—"I 'll be free."[9]
Friends, parents, relatives, hope, reason, love,
With anxious ardour for that empire strove;
In vain their strife, in vain the means applied,
They had no comfort, but that all were tried;
One strong vain trial made, the mind to move,
Was the last effort of parental love.
E'en then he watch'd his father from his home,
And to his mother would for pity come,
Where, as he made her tender terrors rise,
He talk'd of death, and threaten'd for supplies.
Against a youth so vicious and undone,
All hearts were closed, and every door but one:
The Players received him; they with open heart
Gave him his portion and assign'd his part;
And ere three days were added to his life,
He found a home, a duty, and a wife.
His present friends, though they were nothing nice,
Nor ask'd how vicious he, or what his vice,
Still they expected he should now attend
To the joint duty as a useful friend;
The leader too declared, with frown severe,
That none should pawn a robe that kings might wear;
And much it moved him, when he Hamlet play'd,
To see his Father's Ghost so drunken made:
Then too the temper, the unbending pride
Of this ally, would no reproof abide:—
So leaving these, he march'd away and join'd
Another troop, and other goods purloin'd;
And other characters, both gay and sage,
Sober and sad, made stagger on the stage.
Then to rebuke with arrogant disdain,
He gave abuse, and sought a home again.
Thus changing scenes, but with unchanging vice,
Engaged by many, but with no one twice:
Of this, a last and poor resource, bereft,
He to himself, unhappy guide! was left—
And who shall say where guided? to what seats
Of starving villany? of thieves and cheats?
In that sad time of many a dismal scene
Had he a witness, not inactive, been;
Had leagued with petty pilferers, and had crept
Where of each sex degraded numbers slept:
With such associates he was long allied,
Where his capacity for ill was tried,
And that once lost, the wretch was cast aside,
For now, though willing with the worst to act,
He wanted powers for an important fact;
And while he felt as lawless spirits feel,
His hand was palsied, and he couldn't steal.
By these rejected, is their lot so strange,
So low! that he could suffer by the change?
Yes! the new station as a fall we judge,—
He now became the harlots' humble drudge,
Their drudge in common; they combined to save
Awhile from starving their submissive slave;
For now his spirit left him, and his pride,
His scorn, his rancour, and resentment died;
Few were his feelings—but the keenest these,
The rage of hunger, and the sigh for ease;
He who abused indulgence, now became
By want subservient, and by misery tame;
A slave, he begg'd forbearance; bent with pain,
He shunn'd the blow,—"Ah! strike me not again."
Thus was he found: the master of a hoy
Saw the sad wretch whom he had known a boy;
At first in doubt, but Frederick laid aside
All shame, and humbly for his aid applied;
He, tamed and smitten with the storms gone by,
Look'd for compassion through one living eye,
And stretch'd th' unpalsied hand: the seaman felt
His honest heart with gentle pity melt,
And his small boon with cheerful frankness dealt;
Then made inquiries of th' unhappy youth,
Who told, nor shame forbade him, all the truth.
"Young Frederick Thompson, to a chandler's shop
"By harlots order'd, and afraid to stop!—

[9] [Original edition:—

Vice, dreadful habit! when assumed so long,
Becomes at length inveterately strong;
As, more indulged, it gains the strength we lose,
Maintains its conquests and extends its views;
Till, the whole soul submitting to its chains,
It takes possession, and for ever reigns.]

"What! our good merchant's favourite to be seen
"In state so loathsome and in dress so mean?"—
So thought the seaman as he bade adieu,
And, when in port, related all he knew.
But time was lost, inquiry came too late,
Those whom he served knew nothing of his fate;
No! they had seized on what the sailor gave,
Nor bore resistance from their abject slave.
The spoil obtain'd, they cast him from the door,
Robb'd, beaten, hungry, pain'd, diseas'd, and poor.
Then nature, pointing to the only spot
Which still had comfort for so dire a lot,
Although so feeble, led him on the way,
And hope look'd forward to a happier day:
He thought, poor prodigal! a father yet
His woes would pity and his crimes forget;
Nor had he brother who with speech severe
Would check the pity or refrain the tear:
A lighter spirit in his bosom rose,
As near the road he sought an hour's repose.
And there he found it: he had left the town,
But buildings yet were scatter'd up and down;
To one of these, half-ruin'd and half-built,
Was traced this child of wretchedness and guilt;
There, on the remnant of a beggar's vest,
Thrown by in scorn, the sufferer sought for rest;
There was this scene of vice and woe to close,
And there the wretched body found repose.[10]

LETTER XIII.

Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.—Pope.

There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pool,
And do a wilful stillness entertain;
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion,
As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,
"And when I ope my lips let no dog bark."
Merchant of Venice.

Sum felix; quis enim neget? felixque manebo:
Hoc quoque quis dubitet? Tutum me copia fecit.

THE ALMS-HOUSE AND TRUSTEES.

The frugal Merchant—Rivalship in Modes of Frugality—Private Exceptions to the general Manners—Alms-house built Its Description—Founder dies—Six Trustees—Sir Denys Brand, a Principal—His Eulogium in the Chronicles of the Day—Truth reckoned invidious on these Occasions—An explanation of the Magnaminity and Wisdom of Sir Denys—His kinds of Moderation and Humility—Laughton, his Successor, a planning, ambitious, wealthy Man—Advancement in Life his perpetual Object, and all things made the means of it—His Idea of Falsehood—His Resentment dangerous; how removed—Success produces Love of Flattery: his daily Gratification—His Merits and Acts of Kindness—His proper Choice of Almsmen—In this respect meritorious—His Predecessor not so cautious.

Leave now our streets, and in yon plain behold
Those pleasant Seats for the reduced and old;
A merchant's gift, whose wife and children died,
When he to saving all his powers applied;
He wore his coat till bare was every thread,
And with the meanest fare his body fed.
He had a female cousin, who with care
Walk'd in his steps, and learn'd of him to spare;
With emulation and success they strove,
Improving still, still seeking to improve,
As if that useful knowledge they would gain—
How little food would human life sustain:
No pauper came their table's crumbs to crave;
Scraping they lived, but not a scrap they gave:
When beggars saw the frugal Merchant pass,
It moved their pity, and they said, "Alas!
"Hard is thy fate, my brother," and they felt
A beggar's pride as they that pity dealt.
The dogs, who learn of man to scorn the poor,
Bark'd him away from every decent door;
While they who saw him bare, but thought him rich,
To show respect or scorn, they knew not which.
But while our Merchant seem'd so base and mean,
He had his wanderings, sometimes "not unseen;"
To give in secret was a favourite act,
Yet more than once they took him in the fact:
To scenes of various woe he nightly went,
And serious sums in healing misery spent;
Oft has he cheer'd the wretched at a rate
For which he daily might have dined on plate;
He has been seen—his hair all silver-white,
Shaking and shining—as he stole by night,
To feed unenvied on his still delight.
A twofold taste he had; to give and spare,
Both were his duties, and had equal care;
It was his joy to sit alone and fast,
Then send a widow and her boys repast:
Tears in his eyes, would spite of him, appear,
But he from other eyes has kept the tear:
All in a wint'ry night from far he came,
To soothe the sorrows of a suffering dame;
Whose husband robb'd him, and to whom he meant
A ling'ring, but reforming punishment:
Home then he walk'd, and found his anger rise
When fire and rushlight met his troubled eyes;
But these extinguish'd, and his prayer address'd
To Heaven in hope, he calmly sank to rest.
His seventieth year was pass'd, and then was seen
A building rising on the northern green;
There was no blinding all his neighbours' eyes,
Or surely no one would have seen it rise:
Twelve rooms contiguous stood, and six were near,
There men were placed, and sober matrons here;
There were behind small useful gardens made,
Benches before, and trees to give them shade;
In the first room were seen above, below,
Some marks of taste, a few attempts at show.
The founder's picture and his arms were there
(Not till he left us), and an elbow'd chair;
There, 'mid these signs of his superior place,
Sat the mild ruler of this humble race.
Within the row are men who strove in vain,
Through years of trouble, wealth and ease to gain;

[10] The Letter on Itinerant Players will to some appear too harshly written, their profligacy exaggerated, and their distresses magnified; but though the respectability of a part of these people may give us a more favourable view of the whole body; though some actors be sober, and some managers prudent; still there is vice and misery left more than sufficient to justify my description. But, if I could find only one woman (who passing forty years on many stages, and sustaining many principal

Less must they have than an appointed sum,
And freemen been, or hither must not come;
They should be decent, and command respect,
(Though needing fortune), whom these doors protect,
And should for thirty dismal years have tried
For peace unfelt and competence denied.
Strange! that o'er men thus train'd in sorrow's school,
Power must be held, and they must live by rule;
Infirm, corrected by misfortunes, old,
Their habits settled and their passions cold;
Of health, wealth, power, and worldly cares bereft,
Still must they not at liberty be left;
There must be one to rule them, to restrain
And guide the movements of his erring train.
If then control imperious, check severe,
Be needed where such reverend men appear;
To what would youth, without such checks, aspire,
Free the wild wish, uncurb'd the strong desire?
And where (in college or in camp) they found
The heart ungovern'd and the hand unbound?
His house endow'd, the generous man resign'd
All power to rule, nay power of choice declined;
He and the female saint survived to view
Their work complete, and bade the world adieu!
Six are the Guardians of this happy seat,
And one presides when they on business meet;
As each expires, the five a brother choose;
Nor would *Sir Denys Brand* the charge refuse;
True, 't was beneath him, "but to do men good
"Was motive never by his heart withstood:"
He too is gone, and they again must strive
To find a man in whom his gifts survive.
Now, in the various records of the dead,
Thy worth, Sir Denys, shall be weigh'd and read;
There we the glory of thy house shall trace,
With each alliance of thy noble race.
Yes! here we have him!—"Came in William's reign,
"The Norman *Brand;* the blood without a stain;
"From the fierce Dane and ruder Saxon clear,
"Pict, Irish, Scot, or Cambrian mountaineer:
"But the pure Norman was the sacred spring,
"And he, Sir Denys, was in heart a king:
"Erect in person and so firm in soul,
"Fortune he seem'd to govern and control:
"Generous as he who gives his all away,
"Prudent as one who toils for weekly pay;
"In him all merits were decreed to meet,
"Sincere though cautious, frank and yet discreet,
"Just all his dealings, faithful every word,
"His passions' master, and his temper's lord."
Yet more, kind dealers in decaying fame?
His magnanimity you next proclaim;
You give him learning, join'd with sound good sense,
And match his wealth with his benevolence;
What hides the multitude of sins, you add,
Yet seem to doubt if sins he ever had.
Poor honest Truth! thou writ'st of living men,
And art a railer and detractor then;
They die, again to be described, and now
A foe to merit and mankind art thou!
Why banish Truth? It injures not the dead,
It aids not them with flattery to be fed;
And when mankind such perfect pictures view,
They copy less, the more they think them true.
Let us a mortal as he was behold,
And see the dross adhering to the gold;
When we the errors of the virtuous state,
Then erring men their worth may emulate.
View then this picture of a noble mind,
Let him be wise, magnanimous, and kind;
What *was* the wisdom? Was it not the frown
That keeps all question, all inquiry down?
His words were powerful and decisive all,
But his slow reasons came for no man's call.
"'T is thus," he cried, no doubt with kind intent,
To give results and spare all argument:—
"Let it be spared—all men at least agree
"Sir Denys Brand had magnanimity:
"His were no vulgar charities; none saw
"Him like the Merchant to the hut withdraw;
"He left to meaner minds the simple deed,
"By which the houseless rest, the hungry feed;
"His was a public bounty vast and grand,
"'T was not in him to work with viewless hand;
"He raised the Room that towers above the street,
"A public room where grateful parties meet;
"He first the Life-boat plann'd; to him the place
"Is deep in debt—'t was he revived the Race;
"To every public act this hearty friend
"Would give with freedom or with frankness lend;
"His money built the Jail, nor prisoner yet
"Sits at his ease, but he must feel the debt;
"To these let candour add his vast display;
"Around his mansion all is grand and gay,
"And this is bounty with the name of pay."
I grant the whole, nor from one deed retract,
But wish recorded too the private act:
All these were great, but still our hearts approve
Those simpler tokens of the Christian love;
'T would give me joy some gracious deed to meet,
That has not call'd for glory through the street:
Who felt for many, could not always shun,
In some soft moment, to be kind to one;
And yet they tell us, when Sir Denys died,
That not a widow in the Borough sigh'd;
Great were his gifts, his mighty heart I own,
But why describe what all the world has known?
The rest is petty pride, the useless art
Of a vain mind to hide a swelling heart:
Small was his private room: men found him there
By a plain table, on a paltry chair;

characters) laments in her unrespected old age, that there was *no* workhouse to which she could legally sue for admission; if I could produce only one female, seduced upon the boards, and starved in her lodging, compelled by her poverty to sing, and by her sufferings to weep, without any prospect but misery, or any consolation but death; if I could exhibit only one youth who sought refuge from parental authority in the licentious freedom of a wandering company; yet, with three such examples, I should feel myself justified in the account I have given:—but such characters and sufferings are common, and there are few of these societies which could not show members of this description. To some, indeed, the life has its satisfactions: they never expected to be free from labour, and their present kind they think is light: they have no delicate ideas of shame, and therefore duns and hisses give them no other pain than what arises from the fear of not being trusted, joined with the apprehension that they may have nothing to subsist upon except their credit.

A wretched floor-cloth, and some prints around,
The easy purchase of a single pound:
These humble trifles and that study small
Make a strong contrast with the servants' hall;
There barely comfort, here a proud excess,
The pompous seat of pamper'd idleness,
Where the sleek rogues with one consent declare,
They would not live upon his honour's fare;
He daily took but one half-hour to dine,
On one poor dish and some three sips of wine;
Then he 'd abuse them for their sumptuous feasts,
And say, "My friends! you make yourselves like beasts;
"One dish suffices any man to dine,
"But you are greedy as a herd of swine;
"Learn to be temperate."—Had they dared t'obey,
He would have praised and turn'd them all away.
Friends met Sir Denys riding in his ground,
And there the meekness of his spirit found:[1]
For that grey coat, not new for many a year,
Hides all that would like decent dress appear;
An old brown pony 't was his will to ride,
Who shuffled onward, and from side to side;
A five-pound purchase, but so fat and sleek,
His very plenty made the creature weak.
"Sir Denys Brand! and on so poor a steed!"
"Poor! it may be—such things I never heed:"
And who that youth behind, of pleasant mien,
Equipp'd as one who wishes to be seen,
Upon a horse, twice victor for a plate,
A noble hunter, bought at dearest rate?—
Him the lad fearing yet resolved to guide,
He curbs his spirit while he strokes his pride.
"A handsome youth, Sir Denys; and a horse
"Of finer figure never trod the course,—
"Yours, without question?"—"Yes! I think a groom
"Bought me the beast; I cannot say the sum:
"I ride him not; it is a foolish pride
"Men have in cattle—but my people ride;
"The boy is—hark ye, sirrah! what's your name?
"Ay, Jacob, yes! I recollect—the same;
"As I bethink me now, a tenant's son—
"I think a tenant,—is your father one?"
There was an idle boy who ran about,
And found his master's humble spirit out;
He would at awful distance snatch a look,
Then run away and hide him in some nook;
"For oh!" quoth he, "I dare not fix my sight
"On him, his grandeur puts me in a fright;
"Oh! Mister Jacob, when you wait on him,
"Do you not quake and tremble every limb?"[2]
The Steward soon had orders—"Summers, see
"That Sam be clothed, and let him wait on me."

Sir Denys died, bequeathing all affairs
In trust to *Laughton's* long-experienced cares;
Before a Guardian, and Sir Denys dead,
All rule and power devolved upon his head,
Numbers are call'd to govern, but in fact
Only the powerful and assuming act.
Laughton, too wise to be a dupe to fame,
Cared not a whit of what descent he came,
Till he was rich; he then conceived the thought
To fish for pedigree, but never caught:
All his desire, when he was young and poor,
Was to advance; he never cared for more:
"Let me buy, sell, be factor, take a wife,
"Take any road, to get along in life."
Was he a miser then? a robber? foe
To those who trusted? a deceiver?—No!
He was ambitious; all his powers of mind
Were to one end controll'd, improved, combined;
Wit, learning, judgment, were, by his account,
Steps for the ladder he design'd to mount;
Such step was money: wealth was but his slave,
For power he gain'd it, and for power he gave:
Full well the Borough knows that he 'd the art
Of bringing money to the surest mart;
Friends too were aids,—they led to certain ends,
Increase of power and claim on other friends.
A favourite step was marriage: then he gain'd
Seat in our Hall, and o'er his party reign'd;
Houses and lands he bought, and long'd to buy,
But never drew the springs of purchase dry,
And thus at last they answer'd every call,
The failing found him ready for their fall:
He walks along the street, the mart, the quay,
And looks and mutters, "This belongs to me."
His passions all partook the general bent;
Interest inform'd him when he should resent,
How long resist, and on what terms relent:
In points where he determined to succeed,
In vain might reason or compassion plead;
But gain'd his point, he was the best of men,
'T was loss of time to be vexatious then:
Hence he was mild to all men whom he led,
Of all who dared resist, the scourge and dread.
Falsehood in him was not the useless lie
Of boasting pride or laughing vanity:
It was the gainful, the persuading art,
That made its way and won the doubting heart,
Which argued, soften'd, humbled, and prevail'd,
Nor was it tried till ev'ry truth had fail'd;
No sage on earth could more than he despise
Degrading, poor, unprofitable lies.
Though fond of gain, and grieved by wanton waste,
To social parties he had no distaste;
With one presiding purpose in his view,
He sometimes could descend to trifle too!
Yet, in these moments, he had still the art
To ope the looks and close the guarded heart;
And, like the public host, has sometimes made
A grand repast, for which the guests have paid.
At length, with power endued and wealthy grown,
Frailties and passions, long suppress'd, were shown:
Then to provoke him was a dangerous thing,
His pride would punish, and his temper sting;
His powerful hatred sought th' avenging hour,
And his proud vengeance struck with all his power,

[1] [Original edition:—
You 'd meet Sir Denys in a morning ride,
And be convinced he 'd not a spark of pride.]

[2] [Sir Denys Brand is a portrait. A female servant of Mr. Crabbe, who had previously lived with the original, with great simplicity confessed that she trembled whenever she met him; and "was more afraid of him than she was of God Almighty." The name of the person is omitted—it would only serve to wound the feelings of his relatives yet surviving.]

Save when th' offender took a prudent way
The rising storm of fury to allay:
This might he do, and so in safety sleep,
By largely casting to the angry deep;
Or, better yet (its swelling force t' assuage),
By pouring oil of flattery on its rage.
And now, of all the heart approved, possess'd,
Fear'd, favour'd, follow'd, dreaded and caress'd,
He gently yields to one mellifluous joy,
The only sweet that is not found to cloy,
Bland adulation!—other pleasures pall
On the sick taste, and transient are they all;
But this one sweet has such enchanting power,
The more we take, the faster we devour:
Nauseous to those who must the dose apply,
And most disgusting to the standers-by;
Yet in all companies will Laughton feed,
Nor care how grossly men perform the deed.
As gapes the nursling, or, what comes more near,
Some Friendly-Island chief, for hourly cheer;
When wives and slaves, attending round his seat,
Prepare by turns the masticated meat:
So for this master, husband, parent, friend,
His ready slaves their various efforts blend,
And, to their lord still eagerly inclined,
Pour the crude trash of a dependent mind.
But let the Muse assign the man his due,
Worth he possess'd, nor were his virtues few:—
He sometimes help'd the injured in their cause;
His power and purse have back'd the failing laws;
He for religion has a due respect,
And all his serious notions are correct;
Although he pray'd and languish'd for a son,
He grew resign'd when Heaven denied him one;
He never to this quiet mansion sends
Subject unfit, in compliment to friends;
Not so Sir Denys, who would yet protest
He always chose the worthiest and the best:
Not men in trade by various loss brought down,
But those whose glory once amazed the town,
Who their last guinea in their pleasures spent,
Yet never fell so low as to repent:
To these his pity he could largely deal,
Wealth they had known, and therefore want could feel.
Three seats were vacant while Sir Denys reign'd,
And three such favourites their admission gain'd;
These let us view, still more to understand
The moral feelings of Sir Denys Brand.[3]

[3] For the Alms-house itself, its Governors, and Inhabitants, I have not much to offer in favour of the subject or of the character. One of these, Sir Denys Brand, may be considered as too highly placed for an author, who seldom ventures above middle life, to delineate; and, indeed, I had some idea of reserving him for another occasion, where he might have appeared with those in his own rank: but then it is most uncertain whether he would ever appear, and he has been so many years prepared for the public, whenever opportunity might offer, that I have at length given him place, and though with his inferiors, yet as a ruler over them.

LETTER XIV.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALMS-HOUSE.

Sed quia cæcus inest vitiis amor, omne futurum
Despicitur; suadent brevem præsentia fructum,
Et ruit in vetitum damni secura libido.
CLAUD. *in Eutrop.*

Nunquam parvo contenta paratu,
Et quæsitorum terrâ pelagoque ciborum
Ambitiosa fames, et lautæ gloria mensæ.—LUCAN.

Et Luxus, populator Opum, tibi semper adhærens,
Infelix humili gressu comitatur Egestas.
CLAUD. *in Ruf.*

Behold what blessing wealth to life can lend.—POPE.

LIFE OF BLANEY.[1]

Blaney, a wealthy Heir, dissipated, and reduced to Poverty—His fortune restored by Marriage; again consumed.—His Manner of Living in the West Indies—Recalled to a larger Inheritance—His more refined and expensive Luxuries—His method of *quieting* Conscience—Death of his Wife—Again become poor—His method of supporting Existence—His Ideas of Religion—His Habits and Connections when old—Admitted into the Alms-house.

OBSERVE that tall pale Veteran! what a look
Of shame and guilt!—who cannot read that book?
Misery and mirth are blended in his face,
Much innate vileness and some outward grace;
There wishes strong and stronger griefs are seen,
Looks ever changed, and never one serene:
Show not that manner, and these features all,
The serpent's cunning and the sinner's fall?
Hark to that laughter!—'t is the way he takes
To force applause for each vile jest he makes;
Such is yon man, by partial favour sent,
To these calm seats to ponder and repent.
Blaney, a wealthy heir at twenty-one,
At twenty-five was ruin'd and undone,
These years with grievous crimes we need not load,
He found his ruin in the common road!—
Gamed without skill, without inquiry bought,
Lent without love, and borrow'd without thought.
But, gay and handsome, he had soon the dower
Of a kind wealthy widow in his power;
Then he aspired to loftier flights of vice,
To singing harlots of enormous price:
He took a jockey in his *gig* to buy
A horse, so valued, that a duke was shy:
To gain the plaudits of the knowing few,
Gamblers and grooms, what would not Blaney do?
His dearest friend, at that improving age,
Was Hounslow Dick, who drove the western stage.
Cruel he was not—if he left his wife,
He left her to her own pursuits in life;

[1] [This character is drawn from real life; though the extreme degradation is exaggerated. The original has been long dead—leaving no relatives. He was a half-pay Major in a garrison town on the eastern coast.]

Deaf to reports, to all expenses blind,
Profuse, not just, and careless, but not kind.
Yet, thus assisted, ten long winters pass'd
In wasting guineas ere he saw his last;
Then he began to reason, and to feel
He could not dig, nor had he learn'd to steal;
And should he beg as long as he might live,
He justly fear'd that nobody would give:
But he could charge a pistol, and at will,
All that was *mortal*, by a bullet kill:
And he was taught, by those whom he would call
Man's surest guides—that he was mortal all.
While thus he thought, still waiting for the day
When he should dare to blow his brains away,
A place for him a kind relation found,
Where England's monarch ruled, but far from English ground:
He gave employ that might for bread suffice,
Correct his habits and restrain his vice.
Here Blaney tried (what such man's miseries teach)
To find what pleasures were within his reach;
These he enjoy'd, though not in just the style
He once possess'd them in his native isle;
Congenial souls he found in every place,
Vice in all soils, and charms in every race:
His lady took the same amusing way,
And laugh'd at Time till he had turn'd them grey;
At length for England once again they steer'd,
By ancient views and new designs endear'd;
His kindred died, and Blaney now became
An heir to one who never heard his name.[2]
What could he now?—The man had tried before
The joys of youth, and they were joys no more;
To vicious pleasure he was still inclined,
But vice must now be season'd and refined;
Then as a swine he would on pleasure seize,
Now common pleasures had no power to please:
Beauty alone has for the vulgar charms,
He wanted beauty trembling with alarms:
His was no more a youthful dream of joy,
The wretch desired to ruin and destroy;
He bought indulgence with a boundless price,
Most pleased when decency bow'd down to vice,
When a fair dame her husband's honour sold,
And a frail countess play'd for Blaney's gold.
"But did not conscience in her anger rise?"
Yes! and he learn'd her terrors to despise;
When stung by thought, to soothing books he fled,
And grew composed and harden'd as he read;
Tales of Voltaire, and essays gay and slight,
Pleased him, and shone with their phosphoric light;
Which, though it rose from objects vile and base,
Where'er it came threw splendour on the place,
And was that light which the deluded youth,
And this grey sinner, deem'd the light of truth.
He different works for different cause admired,
Some fix'd his judgment, some his passions fired;
To cheer the mind and raise a dormant flame,
He had the books, decreed to lasting shame,
Which those who read are careful not to name:
These won to vicious act the yielding heart,
And then the cooler reasoners soothed the smart.
He heard of Blount,[3] and Mandeville,[4] and Chubb,[5]
How they the doctors of their day would drub;
How Hume had dwelt on Miracles so well,
That none would now believe a miracle;
And though he cared not works so grave to read,
He caught their faith, and sign'd the sinner's creed.
Thus was he pleased to join the laughing side,
Nor ceased the laughter when his lady died;
Yet was he kind and careful of her fame,
And on her tomb inscribed a virtuous name;
"A tender wife, respected, and so forth,"
The marble still bears witness to the worth.
He has some children, but he knows not where;
Something they cost, but neither love nor care;
A father's feelings he has never known,
His joys, his sorrows, have been all his own.
He now would build—and lofty seat he built,
And sought, in various ways, relief from guilt.
Restless, for ever anxious to obtain
Ease for the heart by ramblings of the brain,
He would have pictures, and of course a Taste,[6]
And found a thousand means his wealth to waste.
Newmarket steeds he bought at mighty cost;
They sometimes won, but Blaney always lost.
Quick came his ruin, came when he had still
For life a relish, and in pleasure skill:
By his own idle reckoning he supposed
His wealth would last him till his life was closed;
But no! he found this final hoard was spent,
While he had years to suffer and repent.
Yet, at the last, his noble mind to show,
And in his misery how he bore the blow,
He view'd his only guinea, then suppress'd,
For a short time, the tumults in his breast,
And mov'd by pride, by habit and despair,
Gave it an opera-bird to hum an air.
Come, ye! who live for Pleasure, come, behold
A man of pleasure when he's poor and old;
When he looks back through life, and cannot find
A single action to relieve his mind;
When he looks forward, striving still to keep
A steady prospect of eternal sleep;
When not one friend is left, of all the train
Whom 't was his pride and boast to entertain,—
Friends now employ'd from house to house to run,
And say, "Alas! poor Blaney is undone!"—
Those whom he shook with ardour by the hand,
By whom he stood as long as he could stand,
Who seem'd to him from all deception clear,
And who, more strange! might think themselves sincere.

[2] [To the character of Blaney we object, as offensive from its extreme and impotent depravity. The first part of his history, however, is sketched with a masterly hand, and affords a good specimen of that sententious and antithetical manner by which Mr. Crabbe sometimes reminds us of the style and versification of Pope.—JEFFREY.]

[3] [The author of "The Oracles of Reason," and of an infidel treatise entitled "Anima Mundi." He put an end to his existence by shooting himself, in 1693.]

[4] [Author of "The Fable of the Bees," written to prove that moral virtue is the invention of knaves, and Christian virtue the imposition of fools; that vice is necessary, and alone sufficient to render society flourishing and happy.]

[5] [A noted deistical writer. He died in 1746, leaving behind him two volumes of tracts, which were afterwards published.]

[6] ["What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
Some demon whispered, 'Visto! have a Taste.'"—POPE.]

Lo! now the hero shuffling through the town,
To hunt a dinner and to beg a crown;
To tell an idle tale, that boys may smile;
To bear a strumpet's billet-doux a mile;
To cull a wanton for a youth of wealth
(With reverend view to both his taste and health);
To be a useful, needy thing between
Fear and desire—the pander and the screen;
To flatter pictures, houses, horses, dress,
The wildest fashion, or the worst excess;
To be the grey seducer, and entice
Unbearded folly into acts of vice:
And then, to level every fence which law
And virtue fix to keep the mind in awe,
He first inveigles youth to walk astray,
Next prompts and soothes them in their fatal way,
Then vindicates the deed, and makes the mind his prey.

Unhappy man! what pains he takes to state—
(Proof of his fear!) that all below is fate;
That all proceed in one appointed track,
Where none can stop, or take their journey back:
Then what is vice or virtue?—Yet he 'll rail
At priests till memory and quotation fail;
He reads, to learn the various ills they 've done,
And calls them vipers, every mother's son.

He is the harlot's aid, who wheedling tries
To move her friend for vanity's supplies;
To weak indulgence he allures the mind,
Loth to be duped, but willing to be kind;
And if successful—what the labour pays?
He gets the friend's contempt and Chloe's praise,
Who, in her triumph, condescends to say,
"What a good creature Blaney was to-day!"

Hear the poor demon when the young attend,
And willing ear to vile experience lend;
When he relates (with laughing, leering eye)
The tale licentious, mix'd with blasphemy:
No genuine gladness his narrations cause,
The frailest heart denies sincere applause;
And many a youth has turn'd him half aside,
And laugh'd aloud, the sign of shame to hide.

Blaney, no aid in his vile cause to lose,
Buys pictures, prints, and a licentious Muse;
He borrows every help from every art,
To stir the passions and mislead the heart:
But from the subject let us soon escape,
Nor give this feature all its ugly shape;
Some to their crimes escape from satire owe;
Who shall describe what Blaney dares to show?

While thus the man, to vice and passion slave,
Was, with his follies, moving to the grave,
The ancient ruler of this mansion died,
And Blaney boldly for the seat applied:
Sir Denys Brand, then guardian, join'd his suit:
"'T is true," said he, "the fellow 's quite a brute—
"A very beast; but yet, with all his sin,
"He has a manner—let the devil in."

They half complied, they gave the wish'd retreat,
But raised a worthier to the vacant seat.

Thus forced on ways unlike each former way,
Thus led to prayer without a heart to pray,
He quits the gay and rich, the young and free,
Among the badge-men with a badge to be:
He sees an humble tradesman rais'd to rule
The grey-beard pupils of this moral school;
Where he himself, an old licentious boy,
Will nothing learn, and nothing can enjoy;
In temp'rate measures he must eat and drink,
And, pain of pains! must live alone and think.

In vain, by fortune's smiles, thrice affluent made,
Still has he debts of ancient date unpaid;
Thrice into penury by error thrown,
Not one right maxim has he made his own;
The old men shun him,—some his vices hate,
And all abhor his principles and prate;
Nor love nor care for him will mortal show,
Save a frail sister in the female row.[7]

LETTER XV.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALMS-HOUSE.

She early found herself mistress of herself. All she did was right; all she said was admired. Early, very early, did she dismiss blushes from her cheek: she could not blush because she could not doubt; and silence, whatever was her subject, was as much a stranger to her as diffidence.—RICHARDSON.

Quo fugit Venus? heu! Quove color? decens
Quo motus? Quid habes illius, illius,
Quæ spirabat amores,
Quæ me surpuerat mihi?
HORAT. lib. iv. Od. 13.

CLELIA.[1]

Her lively and pleasant Manners—Her Reading and Decision—Her Intercourse with different Classes of Society—Her Kind of Character—The favoured Lover—Her Management of him: his of her—After one Period, Clelia with an Attorney: her Manner and Situation there Another such Period, when her Fortune still declines—Mistress of an Inn—A Widow—Another such Interval: she becomes poor and infirm, but still vain and frivolous—The fallen Vanity—Admitted into the House: meets Blaney.

We had a sprightly nymph—in every town
Are some such sprights, who wander up and down;
She had her useful arts, and could contrive,
In Time's despite, to stay at twenty-five;—
"Here will I rest; move on, thou lying year,
"This is mine age, and I will rest me here."

[7] Blaney and Clelia, a male and female inhabitant of this mansion, are drawn at some length; and I may be thought to have given them attention which they do not merit. I plead not for the originality, but for the truth of the character; and though it may not be very pleasing, it may be useful to delineate (for certain minds) these mixtures of levity and vice; people who are thus incurably vain and determinately worldly; thus devoted to enjoyment and insensible of shame, and so miserably fond of their pleasures, that they court even the remembrance with eager solicitation, by conjuring up the ghosts of departed indulgences with all the aid that memory can afford them. These characters demand some attention, because they hold out a warning to that numerous class of young people who are too lively to be discreet; to whom the purpose of life is amusement, and who are always in danger of falling into vicious habits, because they have too much activity to be quiet, and too little strength to be steady.

[1] [Clelia, like Blaney, is a strong resemblance of an individual known to Mr. Crabbe in early life. She has been dead nearly half a century; but, having relatives, it would be wrong to be more particular.]

Arch was her look, and she had pleasant ways
Your good opinion of her heart to raise;
Her speech was lively, and with ease express'd,
And well she judged the tempers she address'd:
If some soft stripling had her keenness felt,
She knew the way to make his anger melt;
Wit was allow'd her, though but few could bring
Direct example of a witty thing;
'T was that gay, pleasant, smart, engaging speech,
Her beaux admired, and just within their reach;
Not indiscreet, perhaps, but yet more free
Than prudish nymphs allow their wit to be.
Novels and plays, with poems old and new,
Were all the books our nymph attended to;
Yet from the press no treatise issued forth,
But she would speak precisely of its worth.
She with the London stage familiar grew,
And every actor's name and merit knew;
She told how this or that their part mistook,
And of the rival Romeos gave the look;
Of either house 't was hers the strength to see,
Then judge with candour—"Drury Lane for me."
What made this knowledge, what this skill complete?
A fortnight's visit in Whitechapel Street.
Her place in life was rich and poor between,
With those a favourite, and with these a queen;
She could her parts assume, and condescend
To friends more humble while an humble friend;
And thus a welcome, lively guest could pass,
Threading her pleasant way from class to class.
"Her reputation?"—That was like her wit,
And seem'd her manner and her state to fit;
Something there was—what, none presumed to say;
Clouds lightly passing on a smiling day,—
Whispers and hints which went from ear to ear,
And mix'd reports no judge on earth could clear.
But of each sex a friendly number press'd
To joyous banquets this alluring guest:
There, if indulging mirth, and freed from awe,
If pleasing all, and pleased with all she saw,
Her speech were free, and such as freely dwelt
On the same feelings all around her felt;
Or if some fond presuming favourite tried
To come so near as once to be denied;
Yet not with brow so stern or speech so nice,
But that he ventured on denial twice:—
If these have been, and so has Scandal taught,
Yet Malice never found the proof she sought.
But then came one, the Lovelace of his day,
Rich, proud, and crafty, handsome, brave, and gay;
Yet loved he not those labour'd plans and arts,
But left the business to the ladies' hearts,
And when he found them in a proper train,
He thought all else superfluous and vain:
But in that training he was deeply taught,
And rarely fail'd of gaining all he sought;
He knew how far directly on to go,
How to recede and dally to and fro;
How to make all the passions his allies,
And, when he saw them in contention rise,
To watch the wrought-up heart, and conquer by surprise.
Our heroine fear'd him not; it was her part,
To make sure conquest of such gentle heart—
Of one so mild and humble; for she saw
In Henry's eye a love chastised by awe.
Her thoughts of virtue were not all sublime,
Nor virtuous all her thoughts; 't was now her time
To bait each hook, in every way to please,
And the rich prize with dext'rous hand to seize.
She had no virgin-terrors; she could stray
In all love's maze, nor fear to lose her way;
Nay, could go near the precipice, nor dread
A failing caution or a giddy head;
She 'd fix her eyes upon the roaring flood,
And dance upon the brink where danger stood.
'T was nature all, she judged, in one so young,
To drop the eye and falter in the tongue;
To be about to take, and then command
His daring wish, and only view the hand:
Yes! all was nature; it became a maid
Of gentle soul t' encourage love afraid;—
He, so unlike the confident and bold,
Would fly in mute despair to find her cold:
The young and tender germ requires the sun
To make it spread; it must be smiled upon.
Thus the kind virgin gentle means devised,
To gain a heart so fond, a hand so prized;
More gentle still she grew, to change her way,
Would cause confusion, danger, and delay:
Thus (an increase of gentleness her mode),
She took a plain, unvaried, certain road,
And every hour believed success was near,
Till there was nothing left to hope or fear.
It must be own'd that, in this strife of hearts,
Man has advantage—has superior arts:
The lover's aim is to the nymph unknown,
Nor is she always certain of her own;
Or has her fears, nor these can so disguise,
But he who searches, reads them in her eyes,
In the avenging frown, in the regretting sighs:
These are his signals, and he learns to steer
The straighter course whenever they appear.

"Pass we ten years, and what was Clelia's fate?"
At an attorney's board alert she sate,
Not legal mistress: he with other men
Once sought her hand, but other views were then;
And when he knew he might the bliss command,
He other blessing sought, without the hand;
For still he felt alive the lambent flame,
And offer'd her a home,—and home she came.
There, though her higher friendships lived no more,
She loved to speak of what she shared before—
"Of the dear Lucy, heiress of the hall,—
"Of good Sir Peter,—of their annual ball,
"And the fair countess!—Oh! she loved them all!"
The humbler clients of her friend would stare,
The knowing smile,—but neither caused her care;
She brought her spirits to her humble state,
And soothed with idle dreams her frowning fate.

"Ten summers pass'd, and how was Clelia then?"—
Alas! she suffer'd in this trying ten;
The pair had parted: who to him attend,
Must judge the nymph unfaithful to her friend;
But who on her would equal faith bestow,
Would think him rash,—and surely she must know.
Then as a matron Clelia taught a school,
But nature gave not talents fit for rule:

Yet now, though marks of wasting years were seen,
Some touch of sorrow, some attack of spleen;
Still there was life, a spirit quick and gay,
And lively speech and elegant array.
The Griffin's landlord these allured so far,
He made her mistress of his heart and bar;
He had no idle retrospective whim,
Till she was his, her deeds concern'd not him:
So far was well,—but Clelia thought not fit
(In all the Griffin needed) to submit:
Gaily to dress and in the bar preside,
Soothed the poor spirit of degraded pride;
But cooking, waiting, welcoming a crew
Of noisy guests, were arts she never knew:
Hence daily wars, with temporary truce,
His vulgar insult, and her keen abuse;
And as their spirits wasted in the strife,
Both took the Griffin's ready aid of life;
But she with greater prudence—Harry tried
More powerful aid, and in the trial died;
Yet drew down vengeance: in no distant time,
Th' insolvent Griffin struck his wings sublime;—
Forth from her palace walk'd th' ejected queen,
And show'd to frowning fate a look serene;
Gay spite of time, though poor, yet well attired,
Kind without love, and vain if not admired.

Another term is past; ten other years
In various trials, troubles, views, and fears:
Of these some pass'd in small attempts at trade;
Houses she kept for widowers lately made;
For now she said, "They'll miss th'endearing friend,
"And I'll be there the soften'd heart to bend:"
And true a part was done as Clelia plann'd—
The heart was soften'd, but she miss'd the hand;
She wrote a novel, and Sir Denys said
The dedication was the best he read;
But Edgeworths, Smiths, and Radcliffes so engross'd
The public ear, that all her pains were lost.
To keep a toy-shop was attempt the last,
There too she fail'd, and schemes and hopes were past.
Now friendless, sick, and old, and wanting bread,
The first-born tears of fallen pride were shed—
True, bitter tears; and yet that wounded pride,
Among the poor, for poor distinctions sigh'd.
Though now her tales were to her audience fit;
Though loud her tones, and vulgar grown her wit,
Though now her dress—(but let me not explain
The piteous patchwork of the needy-vain,
The flirtish form to coarse materials lent,
And one poor robe through fifty fashions sent);
Though all within was sad, without was mean,—
Still 't was her wish, her comfort, to be seen:
She would to plays on lowest terms resort,
Where once her box was to the beaux a court;
And, strange delight! to that same house where she
Join'd in the dance, all gaiety and glee,
Now with the menials crowding to the wall,
She 'd see, not share, the pleasures of the ball,
And with degraded vanity unfold,
How she too triumph'd in the years of old.
To her poor friends 't is now her pride to tell,
On what a height she stood before she fell;
At church she points to one tall seat, and "There
"We sat," she cries, "when my papa was mayor."
Not quite correct in what she now relates,
She alters persons, and she forges dates;
And, finding memory's weaker help decay'd,
She boldly calls invention to her aid.
Touch'd by the pity he had felt before,
For her Sir Denys oped the Alms-house door:
"With all her faults," he said, "the woman knew
"How to distinguish—had a manner too;
"And, as they say she is allied to some
"In decent station—let the creature come."
Here she and Blaney meet, and take their view
Of all the pleasures they would still pursue:
Hour after hour they sit, and nothing hide
Of vices past; their follies are their pride;
What to the sober and the cool are crimes,
They boast—exulting in those happy times;
The darkest deeds no indignation raise,
The purest virtue never wins their praise;
But still they on their ancient joys dilate,
Still with regret departed glories state,
And mourn their grievous fall, and curse their rigorous fate.[2]

LETTER XVI.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALMS-HOUSE.

Ebrietas tibi fida comes, tibi Luxus, et atris
Circa te semper volitans Infamia pennis.
SILVIUS ITALICUS.

BENBOW.

Benbow, an improper Companion for the Badgemen of the Alms-house—He resembles Bardolph—Left in Trade by his Father—Contracts useless Friendships—His Friends drink with him, and employ others—Called worthy and honest! Why—Effect of Wine on the Mind of Man—Benbow's common Subject—The Praise of departed Friends and Patrons—'Squire Asgill, at the Grange: his Manners, Servants, Friends—True to his Church: ought therefore to be spared—His Son's different Conduct—Vexation of the Father's Spirit if admitted to see the Alteration—Captain Dowling, a boon Companion, ready to drink at all Times, and with any Company: famous in his Club-room—His easy Departure—Dolly Murray, a Maiden advanced in Years: abides by Ratafia and Cards—Her free Manners—Her Skill in the Game—Her Preparation and Death—Benbow, how interrupted: his Submission.

SEE! yonder badgeman with that glowing face,
A meteor shining in this sober place!

2 ["Clelia is another worthless character that is drawn with infinite spirit, and a thorough knowledge of human nature. She began life as a sprightly, talking, flirting girl, who passed for a wit and a beauty in the half-bred circle of the Borough, and who, in laying herself out to entrap a youth of distinction, unfortunately fell a victim to his superior art, and forfeited her place in society. She then became the smart mistress of a dashing attorney—then tried to teach a school—lived as the favourite of an innkeeper—let lodgings—wrote novels—set up a toy-shop—and, finally, was admitted into the alms-house. There is nothing very interesting, perhaps, in such a story; but the details of it show the wonderful accuracy of the author's observation of character, and give it, and many of his other pieces, a value of the same

Vast sums were paid, and many years were past,
Ere gems so rich around their radiance cast!
Such was the fiery front that Bardolph wore,
Guiding his master to the tavern door;[1]
There first that meteor rose, and there alone,
In its due place, the rich effulgence shone:
But this strange fire the seat of peace invades
And shines portentous in these solemn shades.

Benbow, a boon companion, long approved
By jovial sets, and (as he thought) beloved,
Was judged as one to joy and friendship prone,
And deem'd injurious to himself alone:
Gen'rous and free, he paid but small regard
To trade, and fail'd; and some declared "'t was hard:"
These were his friends—his foes conceived the case
Of common kind; he sought and found disgrace:
The reasoning few, who neither scorn'd nor loved,
His feelings pitied and his faults reproved.

Benbow, the father, left possessions fair,
A worthy name and business to his heir;
Benbow, the son, those fair possessions sold,
And lost his credit, while he spent the gold:
He was a jovial trader: men enjoy'd
The night with him; his day was unemployed;
So when his credit and his cash were spent,
Here, by mistaken pity, he was sent;
Of late he came, with passions unsubdued,
And shared and cursed the hated solitude,
Where gloomy thoughts arise, where grievous cares intrude.

Known but in drink,—he found an easy friend,
Well pleased his worth and honour to commend:
And thus inform'd, the guardian of the trust
Heard the applause and said the claim was just.
A worthy soul! unfitted for the strife,
Care, and contention of a busy life;—
Worthy, and why?—that o'er the midnight bowl
He made his friend the partner of his soul,
And any man his friend:—then thus in glee,
"I speak my mind, I love the truth," quoth he;
Till 't was his fate that useful truth to find,
'T is sometimes prudent not to speak the mind.

With wine inflated, man is all upblown,
And feels a power which he believes his own;
With fancy soaring to the skies, he thinks
His all the virtues all the while he drinks;
But when the gas from the balloon is gone,
When sober thoughts and serious cares come on,
Where then the worth that in himself he found?—
Vanish'd—and he sank grov'ling on the ground.

Still some conceit will Benbow's mind inflate,
Poor as he is,—'t is pleasant to relate
The joys he once possess'd—it soothes his present state.

Seated with some grey beadsman, he regrets
His former feasting, though it swell'd his debts;
Topers once famed, his friends in earlier days,
Well he describes, and thinks description praise:
Each hero's worth with much delight he paints;
Martyrs they were, and he would make them saints.

"Alas! alas!" Old England now may say,
"My glory withers; it has had its day:
"We 're fallen on evil times; men read and think;
"Our bold forefathers loved to fight and drink.
"Then lived the good 'Squire Asgill—what a change
"Has death and fashion shown us at the Grange!
"He bravely thought it best became his rank,
"That all his tenants and his tradesmen drank;
"He was delighted from his favourite room
"To see them 'cross the park go daily home
"Praising aloud the liquor and the host,
"And striving who should venerate him most.
"No pride had he, and there was difference small
"Between the master's and the servants' hall:
"And here or there the guests were welcome all.
"Of Heaven's free gifts he took no special care,
"He never quarrel'd for a simple hare;
"But sought, by giving sport, a sportsman's name,
"Himself a poacher, though at other game:
"He never planted nor enclosed—his trees
"Grew like himself, untroubled and at ease:
"Bounds of all kinds he hated, and had felt
"Chok'd and imprison'd in a modern belt,
"Which some rare genius now has twined about
"The good old house, to keep old neighbours out.
"Along his valleys, in the evening-hours,
"The borough-damsels stray'd to gather flowers,
"Or by the brakes and brushwood of the park,
"To take their pleasant rambles in the dark.
"Some prudes, of rigid kind, forbore to call
"On the kind females—favourites at the hall;
"But better nature saw, with much delight,
"The different orders of mankind unite:
"'T was schooling pride to see the footman wait,
"Smile on his sister and receive her plate.
"His worship ever was a churchman true,
"He held in scorn the methodistic crew;
"May God defend the Church, and save the King,
"He 'd pray devoutly and divinely sing.
"Admit that he the holy day would spend
"As priests approved not, still he was a friend:
"Much then I blame the preacher, as too nice,
"To call such trifles by the name of vice;
"Hinting, though gently and with cautious speech,
"Of good example—'t is their trade to preach.
"But still 't was pity, when the worthy 'squire
"Stuck to the church, what more could they require?
"'T was almost joining that fanatic crew,
"To throw such morals at his honour's pew;
"A weaker man, had he been so reviled,
"Had left the place—he only swore and smiled.
"But think, ye rectors and ye curates, think,
"Who are your friends, and at their frailties wink;
"Conceive not—mounted on your Sunday-throne,
"Your firebrands fall upon your foes alone;
"They strike your patrons—and should all withdraw,
"In whom your wisdoms may discern a flaw,

kind that some pictures are thought to derive from the truth and minuteness of the anatomy which they display. There is something original, too, and well conceived, in the tenacity with which he represents this frivolous person as adhering to her paltry characteristics under every change of circumstances."—JEFFREY.]

[1] "Thou art the Knight of the Burning Lamp: if thou wast any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be by this fire. Oh! thou 'rt a perpetual triumph, thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking in a night betwixt tavern and tavern."—SHAKSPEARE.

" You would the flower of all your audience lose,
" And spend your crackers on their empty pews.
" The father dead, the son has found a wife,
" And lives a formal, proud, unsocial life;—
" The lands are now enclosed; the tenants all,
" Save at a rent-day, never see the hall;
" No lass is suffer'd o'er the walks to come,
" And if there 's love, they have it all at home.
" Oh! could the ghost of our good 'squire arise,
" And see such change; would it believe its eyes?
" Would it not glide about from place to place,
" And mourn the manners of a feebler race?
" At that long table, where the servants found
" Mirth and abundance while the year went round;
" Where a huge pollard on the winter-fire,
" At a huge distance made them all retire;
" Where not a measure in the room was kept,
" And but one rule—they tippled till they slept—
" There would it see a pale old hag preside,
" A thing made up of stinginess and pride;
" Who carves the meat, as if the flesh could feel;
" Careless whose flesh must miss the plenteous meal;
" Here would the ghost a small coal-fire behold,
" Not fit to keep one body from the cold;
" Then would it flit to higher rooms, and stay
" To view a dull, dress'd company at play;
" All the old comfort, all the genial fare
" For ever gone! how sternly would it stare:
" And though it might not to their view appear,
" 'T would cause among them lassitude and fear;
" Then wait to see—where he delight has seen—
" The dire effect of fretfulness and spleen.
" Such were the worthies of these better days;
" We had their blessings—they shall have our praise.
" Of Captain Dowling would you hear me speak?
" I 'd sit and sing his praises for a week:
" He was a man, and man-like all his joy,—
" I 'm led to question was he ever boy?
" Beef was his breakfast;—if from sea and salt,
" It relish'd better with his wine of malt;
" Then, till he dined, if walking in or out,
" Whether the gravel teased him or the gout,
" Though short in wind and flannel'd every limb,
" He drank with all who had concerns with him:
" Whatever trader, agent, merchant, came,
" They found him ready, every hour the same;
" Whatever liquors might between them pass,
" He took them all, and never balk'd his glass:
" Nay, with the seamen working in the ship,
" At their request, he 'd share the grog and flip.
" But in the club-room was his chief delight,
" And punch the favourite liquor of the night;
" Man after man they from the trial shrank,
" And Dowling ever was the last who drank:
" Arrived at home, he, ere he sought his bed,
" With pipe and brandy would compose his head;
" Then half an hour was o'er the news beguiled,
" When he retired as harmless as a child.
" Set but aside the gravel and the gout,
" And breathing short—his sand ran fairly out.

" At fifty-five we lost him—after that
" Life grows insipid and its pleasures flat;
" He had indulged in all that man can have,
" He did not drop a dotard to his grave;
" Still to the last, his feet upon the chair,
" With rattling lungs now gone beyond repair;
" When on each feature death had fix'd his stamp,
" And not a doctor could the body vamp;
" Still at the last, to his beloved bowl
" He clung, and cheer'd the sadness of his soul;
" For though a man may not have much to fear,
" Yet death looks ugly when the view is near:
" —'I go,' he said, 'but still my friends shall say,
" 'T was as a man—I did not sneak away;
" 'An honest life with worthy souls I 've spent,—
" 'Come, fill my glass;' he took it and he went.
" Poor Dolly Murray!—I might live to see
" My hundredth year, but no such lass as she.
" Easy by nature, in her humour gay,
" She chose her comforts, ratafia and play:
" She loved the social game, the decent glass,
" And was a jovial, friendly, laughing lass;
" We sat not then at Whist demure and still,
" But pass'd the pleasant hours at gay Quadrille:
" Lame in her side, we plac'd her in her seat,
" Her hands were free, she cared not for her feet;
" As the game ended, came the glass around,
" (So was the loser cheer'd, the winner crown'd).
" Mistress of secrets, both the young and old
" In her confided—not a tale she told;
" Love never made impression on her mind,
" She held him weak, and all his captives blind;
" She suffer d no man her free soul to vex,
" Free from the weakness of her gentle sex;
" One with whom ours unmoved conversing sate,
" In cool discussion or in free debate.[2]
" Once in her chair we 'd placed the good old lass,
" Where first she took her preparation-glass;
" By lucky thought she 'd been that day at prayers,
" And long before had fix'd her small affairs;
" So all was easy—on her cards she cast
" A smiling look; I saw the thought that pass'd:
" 'A king,' she call'd—though conscious of her skill,
" 'Do more,' I answer'd—'More,' she said, "I will;'
" And more she did—cards answer'd to her call,
" She saw the mighty to her mightier fall:
" 'A vole! a vole!' she cried, ''t is fairly won,
" 'My game is ended and my work is done;'—
" This said, she gently, with a single sigh,
" Died as one taught and practised how to die.
" Such were the dead-departed; I survive,
" To breathe in pain among the dead-alive."
The bell then call'd these ancient men to pray,
" Again!" said Benbow,—" tolls it every day?
" Where is the life I led?"—He sigh'd and walk'd his way.[3]

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2 [Original edition:—
She suffer'd no man her free soul to vex,
Her sex's pattern, without thoughts of sex;
Out timid girls and lovers, half afraid,
All shunn'd the speeches of the frank old maid.]

3 Benbow may be thought too low and despicable to be admitted here; but he is a borough-character, and however disgusting in some respects a picture may be, it will please some, and be tolerated by many, if it can boast that one merit of being a faithful likeness.

LETTER XVII.

Blessed be the man who provideth for the sick and needy: the Lord shall deliver him in time of trouble.

Quas dederis, solas semper habebis opes.—MARTIAL.

Nil negat, et sese vel non poscentibus offert.—CLAUDIAN.

Decipias alios verbis voltuque benigno;
Nam mihi jam notus dissimulator eris.—MARTIAL.

THE HOSPITAL AND GOVERNORS.

Christian Charity anxious to provide for future as well as present Miseries—*Hence* the Hospital for the Diseased—Description of a recovered Patient—The Building: how erected—The Patrons and Governors—Eusebius—The more active Manager of Business a moral and correct Contributor—One of different Description—Good, the Result, however intermixed with Imperfection.

An ardent spirit dwells with Christian love,
The eagle's vigour in the pitying dove;
'T is not enough that we with sorrow sigh;
That we the wants of pleading man supply,
That we in sympathy with sufferers feel,
Nor hear a grief without a wish to heal;
Not these suffice—to sickness, pain, and woe,
The Christian spirit loves with aid to go;
Will not be sought, waits not for want to plead,
But seeks the duty—nay, prevents the need;
Her utmost aid to every ill applies,
And plans relief for coming miseries.
Hence yonder Building rose: on either side
Far stretch'd the wards, all airy, warm, and wide;
And every ward has beds by comfort spread,
And smooth'd for him who suffers on the bed:
There all have kindness, most relief,—for some
Is cure complete,—it is the sufferer's home:
Fevers and chronic ills, corroding pains,
Each accidental mischief man sustains;
Fractures and wounds, and wither'd limbs and lame,
With all that, slow or sudden, vex our frame,
Have here attendance—here the sufferers lie,
(Where love and science every aid apply,)
And heal'd with rapture live, or soothed by comfort die.
See! one relieved from anguish, and to-day
Allow'd to walk and look an hour away;
Two months confined by fever, frenzy, pain,
He comes abroad and is himself again:
'T was in the spring, when carried to the place,
The snow fell down and melted in his face.
'T is summer now; all objects gay and new,
Smiling alike the viewer and the view:
He stops as one unwilling to advance,
Without another and another glance;
With what a pure and simple joy he sees
Those sheep and cattle browsing at their ease;
Easy himself, there 's nothing breathes or moves,
But he would cherish—all that lives he loves:
Observing every ward as round he goes,
He thinks what pain, what danger they enclose;
Warm in his wish for all who suffer there,
At every view he meditates a prayer:
No evil counsels in his breast abide,
There joy and love, and gratitude reside.
The wish that Roman necks in one were found,[1]
That he who form'd the wish might deal the wound,
This man had never heard; but of the kind,
Is that desire which rises in his mind;
He 'd have all English hands (for further he
Cannot conceive extends our charity),
All but his own, in one right-hand to grow,
And then what hearty shake would he bestow.
"How rose the Building?"—Piety first laid
A strong foundation, but she wanted aid;
To Wealth unwieldly was her prayer address'd,
Who largely gave, and she the donor bless'd:
Unwieldy Wealth then to his couch withdrew,
And took the sweetest sleep he ever knew.
Then busy Vanity sustain'd her part,
"And much," she said, "it moved her tender heart;
"To her all kinds of man's distress were known,
"And all her heart adopted as its own."
Then Science came—his talents he display'd,
And Charity with joy the dome survey'd;
Skill, Wealth, and Vanity, obtain the fame,
And Piety, the joy that makes no claim.
Patrons there are, and Governors, from whom
The greater aid and guiding orders come;
Who voluntary cares and labours take,
The sufferers' servants for the service' sake;
Of these a part I give you—but a part,—
Some hearts are hidden, some have not a heart.
First let me praise—for so I best shall paint
That pious moralist, that reasoning saint!
Can I of worth like thine, Eusebius, speak?[2]
The man is willing, but the Muse is weak;—
'T is thine to wait on woe! to soothe! to heal!
With learning social, and polite with zeal:
In thy pure breast although the passions dwell,
They 're train'd by virtue, and no more rebel;
But have so long been active on her side,
That passion now might be itself the guide.
Law, conscience, honour, all obey'd; all give
Th' approving voice, and make it bliss to live;
While faith, when life can nothing more supply,
Shall strengthen hope, and make it bliss to die.[3]
He preaches, speaks, and writes with manly sense,
No weak neglect, no labour'd eloquence;
Goodness and wisdom are in all his ways,
The rude revere him and the wicked praise.
Upon humility his virtues grow,
And tower so high because so fix'd below;
As wider spreads the oak his bows around,
When deeper with his roots he digs the solid ground.

[1] [Caligula, being in a rage at the people for favouring a party in the Circensian games in opposition to him, cried out, "I wish the Roman people had but one neck."]

[2] [It was never doubted by Mr. Crabbe's family that Eusebius was designed for a portraiture of Burke.]

[3] "Let us, since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die."
POPE.

By him, from ward to ward, is every aid
The sufferer needs, with every care convey'd:
Like the good tree he brings his treasure forth,
And, like the tree, unconscious of his worth;
Meek as the poorest Publican is he,
And strict as lives the straightest Pharisee;
Of both, in him unite the better part,
The blameless conduct and the humble heart.[4]
Yet he escapes not; he, with some, is wise
In carnal things, and loves to moralize:
Others can doubt if all that Christian care
Has not its price—there 's something he may share:
But this and ill severer he sustains,
As gold the fire, and as unhurt remains;
When most reviled, although he feels the smart,
It wakes to nobler deeds the wounded heart,
As the rich olive, beaten for its fruit,
Puts forth at every bruise a bearing shoot.
A second Friend we have, whose care and zeal
But few can equal—few indeed can feel;
He lived a life obscure, and profits made
In the coarse habits of a vulgar trade.
His brother, master of a hoy, he loved
So well, that he the calling disapproved:
"Alas! poor Tom!" the landman oft would sigh
When the gale freshen'd and the waves ran high;
And when they parted, with a tear he 'd say,
"No more adventure!—here in safety stay."
Nor did he feign; with more than half he had
He would have kept the seaman, and been glad.
Alas! how few resist, when strongly tried—
A rich relation's nearer kinsman died;
He sicken'd, and to him the landman went,
And all his hours with cousin Ephraim spent.
This Thomas heard, and cared not: "I," quoth he,
"Have one in port upon the watch for me."
So Ephraim died, and when the will was shown,
Isaac, the landman, had the whole his own:
Who to his brother sent a moderate purse,
Which he return'd in anger, with his curse;
Then went to sea, and made his grog so strong,
He died before he could forgive the wrong.
The rich man built a house, both large and high,
He enter'd in and set him down to sigh;
He planted ample woods and gardens fair,
And walk'd with anguish and compunction there:
The rich man's pines, to every friend a treat,
He saw with pain, and he refused to eat;
His daintiest food, his richest wines, were all
Turn'd by remorse to vinegar and gall:
The softest down by living body press'd,
The rich man bought, and tried to take his rest;
But care had thorns upon his pillow spread,
And scatter'd sand and nettles in his bed:
Nervous he grew,—would often sigh and groan,
He talk'd but little, and he walk'd alone;
Till by his priest convinced, that from one deed
Of genuine love would joy and health proceed,
He from that time with care and zeal began
To seek and soothe the grievous ills of man;
And as his hands their aid to grief apply,
He learns to smile and he forgets to sigh.
Now he can drink his wine and taste his food,
And feel the blessings Heav'n has dealt are good;
And, since the suffering seek the rich man's door,
He sleeps as soundly as when young and poor.
Here much he gives—is urgent more to gain;
He begs—rich beggars seldom sue in vain:
Preachers most famed he moves, the crowd to move,
And never wearies in the work of love:
He rules all business, settles all affairs;
He makes collections, he directs repairs;
And if he wrong'd one brother,—Heav'n forgive
The man by whom so many brethren live!

Then, 'mid our Signatures, a name appears,
Of one for wisdom famed above his years;
And these were forty: he was from his youth
A patient searcher after useful truth:
To language little of his time he gave,
To science less, nor was the Muse's slave;
Sober and grave, his college sent him down,
A fair example for his native town.
Slowly he speaks, and with such solemn air,
You 'd think a Socrates or Solon there;
For though a Christian, he 's disposed to draw
His rules from reason's and from nature's law.
"Know," he exclaims, "my fellow mortals, know,
"Virtue alone is happiness below;
"And what is virtue? prudence first to choose
"Life's real good,—the evil to refuse;
"Add justice then, the eager hand to hold,
"To curb the lust of power and thirst of gold;
"Join temp'rance next, that cheerful health ensures,
"And fortitude unmoved, that conquers or endures."
He speaks, and lo!—the very man you see,
Prudent and temperate, just and patient he,
By prudence taught his worldly wealth to keep,
No folly wastes, no avarice swells the heap:
He no man's debtor, no man's patron lives;
Save sound advice, he neither asks nor gives;
By no vain thoughts or erring fancy sway'd,
His words are weighty, or at least are weigh'd;
Temp'rate in every place—abroad, at home,
Thence will applause, and hence will profit come;
And health from either—he in time prepares
For sickness, age, and their attendant cares,
But not for fancy's ills;—he never grieves
For love that wounds or friendship that deceives.
His patient soul endures what Heav'n ordains,
But neither feels nor fears ideal pains.
"Is aught then wanted in a man so wise?"—
Alas!—I think he wants infirmities;
He wants the ties that knit us to our kind—
The cheerful, tender, soft, complacent mind,

[4] [In some of Mr. Crabbe's graver descriptions there is a tone of chastised and unambitious serenity, which has a powerful influence on the heart, and affects it like the quiet glow of a mild evening. In reading of the passions of Eusebius habitually rallying on the side of virtue, we are forcibly reminded of one of the sublimest traits in modern writing. It is the circumstance of the dying missionary in 'Elizabeth,' who spends his last breath in prayer, not for himself, but for his orphan charge:—"Il sembloit encore prier pour elle, quand déjà la mort l'avoit frappé: tant étoit grande en son ame l'habitude de la charité; tant, durant le cours de sa longue vie, il avoit négligé ses propres intérêts, pour ne songer qu'à ceux d'autrui, puisqu'au moment terrible de comparoître devant le trône du souverain Juge, et de tomber pour toujours dans les abîmes de l'éternité, ce n'étoit pas encore à lui qu'il pensoit."—GIFFORD.]

That would the feelings, which he dreads, excite,
And make the virtues he approves delight;
What dying martyrs, saints, and patriots feel,
The strength of action and the warmth of zeal.
Again attend!—and see a man whose cares
Are nicely placed on either world's affairs,—
Merchant and saint; 'tis doubtful if he knows
To which account he most regard bestows;
Of both he keeps his ledger:—there he reads
Of gainful ventures and of godly deeds;
There all he gets or loses find a place,
A lucky bargain and a lack of grace.
The joys above this prudent man invite
To pay his tax—devotion!—day and night;
The pains of hell his timid bosom awe,
And force obedience to the church's law:
Hence that continual thought,—that solemn air,
Those sad good works, and that laborious prayer.
All these (when conscience, waken'd and afraid,
To think how avarice calls and is obey'd)
He in his journal finds, and for his grief
Obtains the transient opium of relief.
"Sink not, my soul!—my spirit, rise and look
"O'er the fair entries of this precious book:
"Here are the sins, our debts;—this fairer side
"Has what to carnal wish our strength denied;
"Has those religious duties every day
"Paid,—which so few upon the sabbath pay;
"Here too are conquests over frail desires,
"Attendance due on all the church requires;
"Then alms I give—for I believe the word
"Of holy writ, and lend unto the Lord,
"And if not all th' importunate demand,
"The fear of want restrains my ready hand:
"—Behold! what sums I to the poor resign,
"Sums placed in Heaven's own book, as well as mine:
"Rest then, my spirit!—fastings, prayers, and alms,
"Will soon suppress these idly-raised alarms,
"And weigh'd against our frailties, set in view
"A noble balance in our favour due:
"Add that I yearly here affix my name,
"Pledge for large payment—not from love of fame,
"But to make peace within;—that peace to make,
"What sums I lavish! and what gains forsake!
"Cheer up, my heart! let 's cast off every doubt,
"Pray without dread, and place our money out."
Such the religion of a mind that steers
Its way to bliss, between its hopes and fears;
Whose passions in due bounds each other keep,
And thus subdued, they murmur till they sleep;
Whose virtues all their certain limits know,
Like well-dried herbs that neither fade nor grow;
Who for success and safety ever tries,
And with both worlds alternately complies.

Such are the Guardians of this bless'd estate,
Whate'er without, they 're praised within the gate;
That they are men, and have their faults, is true,
But here their worth alone appears in view:
The Muse indeed, who reads the very breast,
Has something of the secrets there express'd,
But yet in charity;—and when she sees
Such means for joy or comfort, health or ease,
And knows how much united minds effect,
She almost dreads their failings to detect;
But Truth commands:—in man's erroneous kind,
Virtues and frailties mingle in the mind,
Happy!—when fears to public spirit move,
And even vices do the work of love.[5]

LETTER XVIII.

Bene paupertas
Humili tecto contenta latet.—SENECA.

Omnes quibu' res sunt minu' secundæ, magi' sunt, nescio quo modo,
Suspiciosi; ad contumeliam omnia accipiunt magis;
Propter suam impotentiam se semper credunt negligi.
TERENT.

To quit of torpid sluggishness the cave,
And from the pow'rful arms of sloth be free,
'T is rising from the dead—Alas! it cannot be.—THOMSON.

THE POOR AND THEIR DWELLINGS.[1]

The Method of treating the Borough Paupers—Many maintained at their own Dwellings—Some Characters of the Poor—The School-mistress, when aged—The Idiot—The poor Sailor—The declined Tradesman and his Companion—This contrasted with the Maintenance of the Poor in a common Mansion erected by the Hundred—The Objections to this Method: Not Want, nor Cruelty, but the necessary Evils of this Mode—What they are—Instances of the Evil—A Return to the Borough Poor—The Dwellings of these—The Lanes and By-ways—No Attention here paid to Convenience—The Pools in the Pathways—Amusements of Sea-port Children—The Town-Flora—Herbs on Walls and vacant Spaces—A female Inhabitant of an Alley—A large Building let to several poor Inhabitants—Their Manners and Habits.

YES! we 've our Borough-vices, and I know
How far they spread, how rapidly they grow;
Yet think not virtue quits the busy place,
Nor charity, the virtues' crown and grace.
"Our Poor, how feed we?"—To the most we give
A weekly dole, and at their homes they live;—
Others together dwell,—but when they come
To the low roof, they see a kind of home,

[5] The characters of the Hospital Directors were written many years since, and, so far as I was capable of judging, are drawn with *fidelity*. I mention this circumstance that, if any reader should find a difference in the versification or expression, he will be thus enabled to account for it.

[1] The Poor are here almost of necessity introduced, for they must be considered, in every place, as a large and interesting portion of its inhabitants. I am aware of the great difficulty of acquiring just notions on the maintenance and management of this class of our fellow-subjects, and I forbear to express any opinion of the various modes which have been discussed or adopted: of one method only I venture to give my sentiments,—that of collecting the poor of a hundred into one building. This admission of a vast number of persons, of all ages and both sexes, of very different inclinations, habits, and capacities, into a society, must, at a first view, I conceive, be looked upon as a cause of both vice and misery; nor does any thing which I have heard or read invalidate the opinion: happily, the method is not a prevailing one, as these houses are, I believe, still confined to that part of the kingdom where they originated.

A social people whom they 've ever known,
With their own thoughts, and manners like their own.
At her old house, her dress, her air the same,
I see mine ancient Letter-loving dame:
" Learning, my child," said she, " shall fame command;
" Learning is better worth than house or land—
" For houses perish, lands are gone and spent;
" In learning then excel, for that 's most excellent."
" And what her learning?"—'T is with awe to look
In every verse throughout one sacred book;
From this her joy, her hope, her peace is sought;
This she has learned, and she is nobly taught.
If aught of mine have gain'd the public ear;
If RUTLAND deigns these humble Tales to hear;
If critics pardon what my friends approved;
Can I mine ancient Widow pass unmoved?
Shall I not think what pains the matron took,
When first I trembled o'er the gilded book?
How she, all patient, both at eve and morn,
Her needle pointed at the guarding horn;
And how she soothed me, when, with study sad,
I labour'd on to reach the final zad?
Shall I not grateful still the dame survey,
And ask the Muse the poet's debt to pay?
Nor I alone, who hold a trifler's pen,
But half our bench of wealthy, weighty men,
Who rule our Borough, who enforce our laws;
They own the matron as the leading cause,
And feel the pleasing debt, and pay the just applause:
To her own house is borne the week's supply;
There she in credit lives, there hopes in peace to die.
With her a harmless Idiot we behold,
Who hoards up silver shells for shining gold:
These he preserves, with unremitted care,
To buy a seat, and reign the Borough's mayor:
Alas!—who could th' ambitious changeling tell,
That what he sought our rulers dared to sell?
Near these a Sailor, in that hut of thatch
(A fish-boat's cabin is its nearest match),
Dwells, and the dungeon is to him a seat,
Large as he wishes—in his view complete:
A lockless coffer and a lidless hutch
That hold his stores, have room for twice as much:
His one spare shirt, long glass, and iron box,
Lie all in view; no need has he for locks:
Here he abides, and, as our strangers pass,
He shows the shipping, he presents the glass;
He makes (unask'd) their ports and business known,
And (kindly heard) turns quickly to his own,
Of noble captains, heroes every one,—
You might as soon have made the steeple run;
And then his messmates, if you 're pleased to stay,
He 'll one by one the gallant souls display,
And as the story verges to an end,
He 'll wind from deed to deed, from friend to friend;
He 'll speak of those long lost, the brave of old,
As princes generous and as heroes bold;
Then will his feelings rise, till you may trace
Gloom, like a cloud, frown o'er his manly face,—
And then a tear or two, which sting his pride;
These he will dash indignantly aside,
And splice his tale;—now take him from his cot,
And for some cleaner berth exchange his lot,
How will he all that cruel aid deplore?
His heart will break, and he will fight no more.
Here is the poor old Merchant: he declined,
And, as they say, is not in perfect mind;
In his poor house, with one poor maiden friend,
Quiet he paces to his journey's end.
Rich in his youth, he traded and he fail'd;
Again he tried, again his fate prevail'd;
His spirits low, and his exertions small,
He fell perforce, he seem'd decreed to fall:
Like the gay knight, unapt to rise was he,
But downward sank with sad alacrity.
A borough-place we gain'd him—in disgrace
For gross neglect, he quickly lost the place;
But still he kept a kind of sullen pride,
Striving his wants to hinder or to hide;
At length, compell'd by very need, in grief
He wrote a proud petition for relief.
" He did suppose a fall, like his, would prove
" Of force to wake their sympathy and love;
" Would make them feel the changes all may know,
" And stir them up a due regard to show."
His suit was granted;—to an ancient maid,
Relieved herself, relief for him was paid:
Here they together (meet companions) dwell,
And dismal tales of man's misfortunes tell:
" 'T was not a world for them, God help them, they
" Could not deceive, nor flatter, nor betray;
" But there 's a happy change, a scene to come,
" And they, God help them! shall be soon at home."
If these no pleasures nor enjoyments gain,
Still none their spirits nor their speech restrain;
They sigh at ease, 'mid comforts they complain.
The poor will grieve, the poor will weep and sigh,
Both when they know, and when they know not why;
But we our bounty with such care bestow,
That cause for grieving they shall seldom know.
Your Plan I love not;—with a number you
Have placed your poor, your pitiable few:
There, in one house, throughout their lives to be,
The pauper-palace which they hate to see:
That giant-building, that high-bounding wall,
Those bare-worn walks, that lofty thund'ring hall,
That large loud clock, which tolls each dreaded hour,
Those gates and locks, and all those signs of power;
It is a prison, with a milder name,
Which few inhabit without dread or shame.[2]

[2] Show not to the poor thy pride,
Let their home a cottage be;
Nor the feeble body hide
In a palace fit for thee;
Let him not about him see
Lofty ceilings, ample halls,
Or a gate his boundary be,
Where nor friend or kinsman calls.
Let him not one walk behold,
That only one which he must tread,
Nor a chamber large and cold,
Where the aged and sick are led;
Better far his humble shed,
Humble sheds of neighbours by,
And the old and tatter'd bed,
Where he sleeps and hopes to die.

Be it agreed—the Poor who hither come
Partake of plenty, seldom found at home;
That airy rooms and decent beds are meant
To give the poor by day, by night, content;
That none are frighten'd, once admitted here,
By the stern looks of lordly Overseer:
Grant that the Guardians of the place attend,
And ready ear to each petition lend;
That they desire the grieving poor to show
What ills they feel, what partial acts they know,
Not without promise, nay desire to heal
Each wrong they suffer, and each woe they feel.
Alas! their sorrows in their bosoms dwell;
They've much to suffer, but have nought to tell;
They have no evil in the place to state,
And dare not say it is the house they hate:
They own there's granted all such place can give,
But live repining, for 't is there they live.
Grandsires are there, who now no more must see,
No more must nurse upon the trembling knee,
The lost loved daughter's infant progeny:
Like death's dread mansion, this allows not place
For joyful meetings of a kindred race.
Is not the matron there, to whom the son
Was wont at each declining day to run?
He (when his toil was over) gave delight,
By lifting up the latch, and one "Good night."
Yes, she is here; but nightly to her door
The son, still lab'ring, can return no more.
Widows are here, who in their huts were left,
Of husbands, children, plenty, ease bereft;
Yet all that grief within the humble shed
Was soften'd, softened in the humble bed:
But here, in all its force, remains the grief,
And not one soft'ning object for relief.
Who can, when here, the social neighbour meet?
Who learn the story current in the street?
Who to the long-known intimate impart
Facts they have learn'd or feelings of the heart?
They talk indeed, but who can choose a friend,
Or seek companions at their journey's end?
Here are not those whom they when infants knew;
Who, with like fortune, up to manhood grew;
Who, with like troubles, at old age arrived;
Who, like themselves, the joy of life survived;
Whom time and custom so familiar made,
That looks the meaning in the mind convey'd:
But here to strangers, words nor looks impart
The various movements of the suffering heart;
Nor will that heart with those alliance own,
To whom its views and hopes are all unknown.
What, if no grievous fears their lives annoy,
Is it not worse no prospects to enjoy?
'T is cheerless living in such bounded view,
With nothing dreadful, but with nothing new;
Nothing to bring them joy, to make them weep,—
The day itself is, like the night, asleep;
Or on the sameness if a break be made,
'T is by some pauper to his grave convey'd;
By smuggled news from neighb'ring village told,
News never true, or truth a twelvemonth old;
By some new inmate doom'd with them to dwell,
Or justice come to see that all goes well;
Or change of room, or hour of leave to crawl
On the black footway winding with the wall,
Till the stern bell forbids, or master's sterner call.
Here too the mother sees her children train'd,
Her voice excluded and her feelings pain'd:
Who govern here, by general rules must move,
Where ruthless custom rends the bond of love.
Nations we know have nature's law trangress'd,
And snatch'd the infant from the parent's breast;
But still for public good the boy was train'd,
The mother suffer'd, but the matron gain'd:
Here nature's outrage serves no cause to aid;
The ill is felt, but not the Spartan made.
Then too I own, it grieves me to behold
Those ever virtuous, helpless now and old,
By all for care and industry approved,
For truth respected, and for temper loved;
And who, by sickness and misfortune tried,
Gave want its worth and poverty its pride:
I own it grieves me to behold them sent
From their old home; 't is pain, 't is punishment,
To leave each scene familiar, every face,
For a new people and a stranger race;
For those who, sunk in sloth and dead to shame,
From scenes of guilt with daring spirits came;
Men, just and guileless, at such manners start,
And bless their God that time has fenced their heart,
Confirm'd their virtue, and expell'd the fear
Of vice in minds so simple and sincere.[3]
Here the good pauper, losing all the praise
By worthy deeds acquired in better days,
Breathes a few months, then, to his chamber led,
Expires, while strangers prattle round his bed.
The grateful hunter, when his horse is old,
Wills not the useless favourite to be sold;
He knows his former worth, and gives him place
In some fair pasture, till he runs his race:
But has the labourer, has the seaman done
Less worthy service, though not dealt to one?
Shall we not then contribute to their ease,
In their old haunts, where ancient objects please?
That, till their sight shall fail them, they may trace
The well-known prospect and the long-loved face.
The noble oak, in distant ages seen,
With far-stretch'd boughs and foliage fresh and green,
Though now its bare and forky branches show
How much it lacks the vital warmth below,
The stately ruin yet our wonder gains,
Nays, moves our pity, without thought of pains:
Much more shall real wants and cares of age
Our gentler passions in their cause engage;—
Drooping and burthen'd with a weight of years,
What venerable ruin man appears!
How worthy pity, love, respect, and grief—
He claims protection—he compels relief;—

[3] [A gentleman intimately acquainted with the Poet and his native county, says, "I hope this Letter may be read by all those who have the power to continue or suppress those odious Houses of Industry, seen, thank God! only in Suffolk, near the first founder's residence (*one* proof that they are not very beneficial), in which the poor of a whole hundred are collected in one building—well fed and clothed, I grant—but imprisoned for life!"]

And shall we send him from our view, to brave
The storms abroad, whom we at home might save,
And let a stranger dig our ancient brother's grave?
No! we will shield him from the storm he fears,
And when he falls, embalm him with our tears.

Farewell to these; but all our poor to know,
Let's seek the winding Lane, the narrow Row,
Suburban prospects, where the traveller stops
To see the sloping tenement on props,
With building-yards immix'd, and humble sheds and shops;
Where the Cross-Keys and Plumber's-Arms invite
Laborious men to taste their coarse delight;
Where the low porches, stretching from the door,
Gave some distinction in the days of yore,
Yet now neglected, more offend the eye,
By gloom and ruin, than the cottage by:
Places like these the noblest town endures,
The gayest palace has its sinks and sewers.
Here is no pavement, no inviting shop,
To give us shelter when compell'd to stop;
But plashy puddles stand along the way,
Fill'd by the rain of one tempestuous day;
And these so closely to the buildings run,
That you must ford them, for you cannot shun;
Though here and there convenient bricks are laid
And door-side heaps afford their dubious aid.
Lo! yonder shed; observe its garden-ground,
With the low paling, form'd of wreck, around:
There dwells a Fisher; if you view his boat,
With bed and barrel—'tis his house afloat;
Look at his house, where ropes, nets, blocks, abound,
Tar, pitch, and oakum—'t is his boat aground:
That space enclosed, but little he regards,
Spread o'er with relicts of masts, sails, and yards:
Fish by the wall, on spit of elder, rest,
Of all his food, the cheapest and the best,
By his own labour caught, for his own hunger dress'd.
Here our reformers come not; none object
To paths polluted, or upbraid neglect;
None care that ashy heaps at doors are cast,
That coal-dust flies along the blinding blast:
None heed the stagnant pools on either side,
Where new-launch'd ships of infant-sailors ride:
Rodneys in rags here British valour boast,
And lisping Nelsons fright the Gallic coast.
They fix the rudder, set the swelling sail,
They point the bowsprit, and they blow the gale:
True to her port, the frigate scuds away,
And o'er that frowning ocean finds her bay:
Her owner rigg'd her, and he knows her worth,
And sees her, fearless, gunwale-deep go forth;
Dreadless he views his sea, by breezes curl'd,
When inch-high billows vex the watery world.
There, fed by food they love, to rankest size,
Around the dwellings docks and wormwood rise;
Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root,
Here the dull nightshade hangs her deadly fruit:
On hills of dust the henbane's faded green,
And pencil'd flower of sickly scent is seen;
At the wall's base the fiery nettle springs,
With fruit globose and fierce with poison'd stings;
Above (the growth of many a year) is spread
The yellow level of the stone-crop's bed:
In every chink delights the fern to grow,
With glossy leaf and tawny bloom below;[4]
These, with our sea-weeds, rolling up and down,
Form the contracted Flora[5] of the town.
Say, wilt thou more of scenes so sordid know?
Then will I lead thee down the dusty Row;
By the warm alley and the long close lane,—
There mark the fractured door and paper'd pane,
Where flags the noon-tide air, and, as we pass,
We fear to breathe the putrefying mass:
But fearless yonder matron; she disdains
To sigh for zephyrs from ambrosial plains;
But mends her meshes torn, and pours her lay
All in the stifling fervour of the day.
Her naked children round the alley run,
And roll'd in dust, are bronzed beneath the sun.
Or gambol round the dame, who, loosely dress'd,
Woos the coy breeze to fan the open breast:
She, once a handmaid, strove by decent art
To charm her sailor's eye and touch his heart;
Her bosom then was veil'd in kerchief clean,
And fancy left to form the charms unseen.
But when a wife, she lost her former care,
Nor thought on charms, nor time for dress could spare;
Careless she found her friends who dwelt beside,
No rival beauty kept alive her pride:
Still in her bosom virtue keeps her place,
But decency is gone, the virtues' guard and grace.
See that long boarded Building!—By these stairs
Each humble tenant to that home repairs—
By one large window lighted—it was made
For some bold project, some design in trade:
This fail'd,—and one, a humourist in his way,
(Ill was the humour,) bought it in decay;
Nor will he sell, repair, or take it down;
'T is his,—what cares he for the talk of town?
"No! he will let it to the poor;—a home
"Where he delights to see the creatures come:"
"They may be thieves;"—"Well, so are richer men;"
"Or idlers, cheats, or prostitutes;"—"What then?"
"Outcasts pursued by justice, vile and base;"—
"They need the more his pity and the place:"
Convert to system his vain mind has built,
He gives asylum to deceit and guilt.
In this vast room, each place by habit fix'd,
Are sexes, families, and ages mix'd—
To union forced by crime, by fear, by need,
And all in morals and in modes agreed;
Some ruin'd men, who from mankind remove;
Some ruin'd females, who yet talk of love;

[4] The scenery is, I must acknowledge, in a certain degree, like that heretofore described in "The Village;" but that, also, was a maritime country: if the objects be similar, the pictures must (in their principal features) be alike, or be bad pictures. I have varied them as much as I could, consistently with my wish to be accurate.

[5] The reader, unacquainted with the language of botany, is informed that the Flora of a place means the vegetable species it contains, and is the title of a book which describes them.

And some grown old in idleness—the prey
To vicious spleen, still railing through the day;
And need and misery, vice and danger bind,
In sad alliance each degraded mind.
That window view!—oil'd paper and old glass
Stain the strong rays, which, though impeded, pass,
And give a dusty warmth to that huge room,
The conquer'd sunshine's melancholy gloom;
When all those western rays, without so bright,
Within become a ghastly glimmering light,
As pale and faint upon the floor they fall,
Or feebly gleam on the opposing wall:
That floor, once oak, now pieced with fir unplaned,
Or, where not pieced, in places bored and stain'd;
That wall once whiten'd, now an odious sight,
Stain'd with all hues, except its ancient white;
The only door is fasten'd by a pin,
Or stubborn bar, that none may hurry in:
For this poor room, like rooms of greater pride,
At times contains what prudent men would hide.
Where'er the floor allows an even space,
Chalking and marks of various games have place;
Boys, without foresight, pleased in halters swing;
On a fix'd hook men cast a flying ring;
While gin and snuff their female neighbours share,
And the black beverage in the fractured ware.
On swinging shelf are things incongruous stored,—
Scraps of their food,—the cards and cribbage-board,—
With pipes and pouches; while on peg below,
Hang a lost member's fiddle and its bow;
That still reminds them how he'd dance and play,
Ere sent untimely to the Convicts' Bay.
Here by a curtain, by a blanket there,
Are various beds conceal'd, but none with care;
Where some by day and some by night, as best
Suit their employments, seek uncertain rest;
The drowsy children at their pleasure creep
To the known crib, and there securely sleep.
Each end contains a grate, and these beside
Are hung utensils for their boil'd and fried—
All used at any hour, by night, by day,
As suit the purse, the person, or the prey.
Above the fire, the mantel-shelf contains
Of china-ware some poor unmatch'd remains;
There many a tea-cup's gaudy fragment stands,
All placed by vanity's unwearied hands;
For here she lives, e'en here she looks about,
To find some small consoling objects out:
Nor heed these Spartan dames their house, not sit
'Mid cares domestic,—they nor sew nor knit;
But of their fate discourse, their ways, their wars,
With arm'd authorities, their 'scapes and scars:
These lead to present evils, and a cup,
If fortune grant it, winds description up.

High hung at either end, and next the wall,
Two ancient mirrors show the forms of all,
In all their force;—these aid them in their dress,
But with the good, the evils too express,
Doubling each look of care, each token of distress.[6]

LETTER XIX.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH.

Nam dives qui fieri vult,
Et cito vult fieri; sed quæ reverentia legum,
Quis metus, aut pudor est unquam properantis avari?
Juv. *Sat.* xiv.[1]

Nocte brevem si fortè indulsit cura soporem,
Et toto versata thoro jam membra quiescunt,
Continuò templum et violati Numinis aras,
Et quod præcipuis mentem sudoribus urget,
Te videt in somnis; tua sacra et major imago
Humanâ turbat pavidum, cogitque fateri.
Juv. *Sat.* xiii.[2]

THE PARISH-CLERK.

The Parish-Clerk began his Duties with the late Vicar, a grave and austere Man; one fully orthodox; a Detecter and Opposer of the Wiles of Satan—His Opinion of his own Fortitude—The more frail offended by these Professions—His good Advice gives further Provocation—They invent Stratagems to overcome his Virtue—His Triumph—He is yet not invulnerable: is assaulted by fear of Want, and Avarice—He gradually yields to the Seduction—He reasons with himself, and is persuaded—He offends, but with Terror; repeats his Offence: grows familiar with Crime: is detected—His Sufferings and Death.

With our late Vicar, and his age the same,
His Clerk, hight *Jachin*, to his office came;
The like slow speech was his, the like tall slender frame:
But Jachin was the gravest man on ground,
And heard his master's jokes with look profound;
For worldly wealth this man of letters sigh'd,
And had a sprinkling of the spirit's pride:
But he was sober, chaste, devout, and just,
One whom his neighbours could believe and trust:
Of none suspected, neither man nor maid
By him were wrong'd, or were of him afraid.
There was indeed a frown, a trick of state
In Jachin;—formal was his air and gait:
But if he seem'd more solemn and less kind,
Than some light men to light affairs confined,
Still 't was allow'd that he should so behave
As in high seat, and be severely grave.
This book-taught man, to man's first foe profess'd
Defiance stern, and hate that knew not rest;[3]

[6] [The graphic powers of Mr. Crabbe are too frequently wasted on unworthy subjects. There is not, perhaps, in all English poetry, a more complete and highly-finished piece of painting than this description of a vast old boarded room or warehouse, which was let out, in the Borough, as a kind of undivided lodging, for beggars and vagabonds of every description. No Dutch painter ever presented an interior more distinctly to the eye, or ever gave half such a group to the imagination.—Jeffrey.]

[1] [——— he who covets wealth, disdains to wait:
Law threatens, conscience calls, yet on he hies,
And this he silences, and that defies.]

[2] [At night, should sleep his harass'd limbs compose,
And steal him one short moment from his woes,
Then dreams invade; sudden, before his eyes,
The violated fane and altar rise;
And (what disturbs him most) your injured shade,
In more than mortal majesty array'd,
Frowns on the wretch, alarms his treach'rous rest,
And wrings the dreadful secret from his breast.
Gifford.]

[3] [Original edition:—
This book-taught man, with ready mind received
More than the Church commanded or believed.]

He held that Satan, since the world began,
In every act, had strife with every man;
That never evil deed on earth was done,
But of the acting parties he was one;
The flattering guide to make ill prospects clear;
To smooth rough ways the constant pioneer;
The ever-tempting, soothing, softening power,
Ready to cheat, seduce, deceive, devour.
"Me has the sly Seducer oft withstood,"
Said pious Jachin,—"but he gets no good;
"I pass the house where swings the tempting sign,
"And pointing, tell him, 'Satan, that is thine:'
"I pass the damsels pacing down the street,
"And look more grave and solemn when we meet;
"Nor doth it irk me to rebuke their smiles,
"Their wanton ambling and their watchful wiles:
"Nay, like the good John Bunyan, when I view
"Those forms, I'm angry at the ills they do;
"That I could pinch and spoil, in sin's despite,
"Beauties, which frail and evil thoughts excite.[4]
"At feasts and banquets seldom am I found,
"And (save at church) abhor a tuneful sound;
"To plays and shows I run not to and fro,
"And where my master goes, forbear to go."
No wonder Satan took the thing amiss,
To be opposed by such a man as this—
A man so grave, important, cautious, wise,
Who dared not trust his feeling or his eyes;
No wonder he should lurk and lie in wait,
Should fit his hooks and ponder on his bait;
Should on his movements keep a watchful eye;
For he pursued a fish who led the fry.
With his own peace our Clerk was not content;
He tried, good man! to make his friends repent.
"Nay, nay, my friends, from inns and taverns fly;
"You may suppress your thirst, but not supply:
"A foolish proverb says, 'the devil's at home;'
"But he is there, and tempts in every room:
"Men feel, they know not why, such places please;
"His are the spells—they 're idleness and ease;
"Magic of fatal kind he throws around,
"Where care is banish'd, but the heart is bound.
"Think not of Beauty;—when a maid you meet,
"Turn from her view and step across the street;
"Dread all the sex: their looks create a charm,
"A smile should fright you and a word alarm:
"E'en I myself, with all my watchful care,
"Have for an instant felt the insidious snare;
"And caught my sinful eyes at the endang'ring stare;
"Till I was forced to smite my bounding breast
"With forceful blow, and bid the bold-one rest.
"Go not with crowds when they to pleasure run,
"But public joy in private safety shun:
"When bells, diverted from their true intent,
"Ring loud for some deluded mortal sent
"To hear or make long speech in parliament;
"What time the many, that unruly beast,
"Roars its rough joy and shares the final feast;
"Then heed my counsel, shut thine ears and eyes;
"A few will hear me—for the few are wise."
Not Satan's friends, nor Satan's self could bear,
The cautious man who took of souls such care;
An interloper,—one who, out of place,
Had volunteer'd upon the side of grace:
There was his master ready once a week
To give advice; what further need he seek?
"Amen, so be it:"—what had he to do
With more than this?—'t was insolent and new;
And some determined on a way to see
How frail he was, that so it might not be.
First they essay'd to tempt our saint to sin,
By points of doctrine argued at an inn;
Where he might warmly reason, deeply drink,
Then lose all power to argue and to think.
In vain they tried; he took the question up,
Clear'd every doubt, and barely touch'd the cup:
By many a text he proved his doctrine sound,
And look'd in triumph on the tempters round.
Next 't was their care an artful lass to find,
Who might consult him, as perplex'd in mind;
She they conceived might put her case with fears,
With tender tremblings and seducing tears;
She might such charms of various kind display,
That he would feel their force and melt away:
For why of nymphs such caution and such dread,
Unless he felt, and fear'd to be misled?
She came, she spake: he calmly heard her case,
And plainly told her 't was a want of grace;
Bade her "such fancies and affections check,
"And wear a thicker muslin on her neck."
Abased, his human foes the combat fled,
And the stern clerk yet higher held his head.
They were indeed a weak, impatient set,
But their shrewd prompter had his engines yet;
Had various means to make a mortal trip,
Who shunn'd a flowing bowl and rosy lip;
And knew a thousand ways his heart to move,
Who flies from banquets and who laughs at love.
Thus far the playful Muse has lent her aid,
But now departs, of graver theme afraid;
Her may we seek in more appropriate time,—
There is no jesting with distress and crime.
Our worthy Clerk had now arrived at fame,
Such as but few in his degree might claim;
But he was poor, and wanted not the sense
That lowly rates the praise without the pence:
He saw the common herd with reverence treat
The weakest burgess whom they chanced to meet;
While few respected his exalted views,
And all beheld his doublet and his shoes:
None, when they meet, would to his parts allow
(Save his poor boys) a hearing or a bow:
To this false judgment of the vulgar mind,
He was not fully, as a saint, resign'd;
He found it much his jealous soul affect,
To fear derision and to find neglect.
The year was bad, the christening-fees were small,
The weddings few, the parties paupers all:
Desire of gain with fear of want combined,
Raised sad commotion in his wounded mind;
Wealth was in all his thoughts, his views, his dreams,
And prompted base desires and baseless schemes.

[4] John Bunyan, in one of the many productions of his zeal, has ventured to make public this extraordinary sentiment, which the frigid piety of our Clerk so readily adopted.

Alas! how often erring mortals keep
The strongest watch against the foes who sleep;
While the more wakeful, bold, and artful foe
Is suffer'd guardless and unmark'd to go.
Once in a month the sacramental bread
Our Clerk with wine upon the table spread:
The custom this, that as the vicar reads,
He for our off'rings round the church proceeds;
Tall spacious seats the wealthier people hid,
And none had view of what his neighbour did:
Laid on the box and mingled when they fell,
Who should the worth of each oblation tell?
Now as poor Jachin took the usual round,
And saw the alms and heard the metal sound,
He had a thought—at first it was no more
Than—"these have cash and give it to the poor."
A second thought from this to work began—
"And can they give it to a poorer man?"
Proceeding thus,—"My merit could they know;
"And knew my need, how freely they 'd bestow;
"But though they know not, these remain the same,
"And are a strong, although a secret claim:
"To me, alas! the want and worth are known;
"Why then, in fact, 'tis but to take my own."
Thought after thought pour'd in, a tempting train:—
"Suppose it done,—who is it could complain?
"How could the poor? for they such trifles share,
"As add no comfort, as suppress no care;
"But many a pittance makes a worthy heap,—
"What says the law? that silence puts to sleep:—
"Nought then forbids, the danger could we shun,
"And sure the business may be safely done.
"But am I earnest?—earnest? No.—I say,
"If such my mind, that I could plan a way;
"Let me reflect;—I 've not allow'd me time
"To purse the pieces, and if dropp'd they 'd chime:"
Fertile is evil in the soul of man,—
He paused,—said Jachin, "They may drop on bran.
"Why then 't is safe and (all consider'd) just,
"The poor receive it,—'t is no breach of trust:
"The old and widows may their trifles miss,
"There must be evil in a good like this:
"But I 'll be kind—the sick I 'll visit twice,
"When now but once, and freely give advice.
"Yet let me think again:"—Again he tried,
For stronger reasons on his passion's side,
And quickly these were found, yet slowly he complied.
The morning came: the common service done,
Shut every door,—the solemn rite begun,—
And, as the priest the sacred sayings read,
The clerk went forward, trembling as he tread:
O'er the tall pew he held the box, and heard
The offer'd piece, rejoicing as he fear'd:
Just by the pillar, as he cautious tripp'd,
And turn'd the aisle, he then a portion slipp'd
From the full store, and to the pocket sent,
But held a moment—and then down it went.
The priest read on, on walk'd the man afraid,
Till a gold offering in the plate was laid:
Trembling he took it, for a moment stopp'd,
Then down it fell, and sounded as it dropp'd;
Amazed he started, for th' affrighted man,
Lost and bewilder'd, thought not of the bran.
But all were silent, all on things intent
Of high concern, none ear to money lent;
So on he walk'd, more cautious than before,
And gain'd the purposed sum and one piece more.
"Practice makes perfect:" when the month came round,
He dropp'd the cash, nor listen'd for a sound:
But yet, when last of all th' assembled flock
He ate and drank,—it gave th' electric shock:
Oft was he forced his reasons to repeat,
Ere he could kneel in quiet at his seat;
But custom soothed him—ere a single year
All this was done without restraint or fear:
Cool and collected, easy and composed,
He was correct till all the service closed;
Then to his home, without a groan or sigh,
Gravely he went, and laid his treasure by.
Want will complain: some widows had express'd
A doubt if they were favour'd like the rest;
The rest described with like regret their dole,
And thus from parts they reason'd to the whole:
When all agreed some evil must be done,
Or rich men's hearts grew harder than a stone.
Our easy vicar cut the matter short;
He would not listen to such vile report.
All were not thus—there govern'd in that year
A stern stout churl, an angry overseer;
A tyrant fond of power, loud, lewd, and most severe:
Him the mild vicar, him the graver clerk,
Advised, reproved, but nothing would he mark,
Save the disgrace; "and that, my friends," said he,
"Will I avenge, whenever time may be."
And now, alas! 't was time;—from man to man
Doubt and alarm and shrewd suspicions ran.
With angry spirit and with sly intent,
This parish-ruler to the altar went:
A private mark he fix'd on shillings three,
And but one mark could in the money see:
Besides, in peering round, he chanced to note
A sprinkling slight on Jachin's Sunday-coat:
All doubt was over:—when the flock were bless'd,
In wrath he rose, and thus his mind express'd:—
"Foul deeds are here!" and saying this, he took
The Clerk, whose conscience, in her cold-fit, shook:
His pocket then was emptied on the place;
All saw his guilt; all witness'd his disgrace:
He fell, he fainted, not a groan, a look,
Escaped the culprit; 't was a final stroke—
A death-wound never to be heal'd—a fall
That all had witness'd, and amazed were all.
As he recover'd, to his mind it came,
"I owe to Satan this disgrace and shame:"
All the seduction now appear'd in view;
"Let me withdraw," he said, and he withdrew:
No one withheld him, all in union cried,
E'en the avenger,—"We are satisfied:"
For what has death in any form to give,
Equal to that man's terrors, if he live?
He lived in freedom, but he hourly saw
How much more fatal justice is than law;
He saw another in his office reign,
And his mild master treat him with disdain:
He saw that all men shunn'd him, some reviled,
The harsh pass'd frowning, and the simple smiled;
The town maintain'd him, but with some reproof,
"And clerks and scholars proudly kept aloof."

In each lone place, dejected and dismay'd,
Shrinking from view, his wasting form he laid;
Or to the restless sea and roaring wind
Gave the strong yearnings of a ruin'd mind:
On the broad beach, the silent summer-day,
Stretch'd on some wreck, he wore his life away;
Or where the river mingles with the sea,
Or on the mud-bank by the elder tree,
Or by the bounding marsh-dyke, there was he:
And when unable to forsake the town,
In the blind courts he sate desponding down—
Always alone; then feebly would he crawl
The church-way walk, and lean upon the wall:
Too ill for this, he lay beside the door,
Compell'd to hear the reasoning of the poor:
He look'd so pale, so weak, the pitying crowd
Their firm belief of his repentance vow'd;
They saw him then so ghastly and so thin,
That they exclaim'd, "Is this the work of sin?"
"Yes," in his better moments, he replied,
"Of sinful avarice and the spirit's pride;—
"While yet untempted, I was safe and well;
"Temptation came; I reason'd, and I fell:
"To be man's guide and glory I design'd,
"A rare example for our sinful kind;
"But now my weakness and my guilt I see,
"And am a warning—man, be warn'd by me!"
He said, and saw no more the human face;
To a lone loft he went, his dying place,
And, as the vicar of his state inquired,
Turn'd to the wall and silently expired![5]

LETTER XX.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH.

Patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest.—SHAKSPEARE.

"No charms she now can boast,"—'t is true,
But other charmers wither too:
"And she is old,"—the fact I know,
And old will other heroines grow;
But not like them has she been laid,
In ruin'd castle, sore dismay'd;
Where naughty man and ghostly spright
Fill'd her pure mind with awe and dread,
Stalk'd round the room, put out the light,
And shook the curtains round her bed.
No cruel uncle kept her land,
No tyrant father forced her hand;
She had no vixen virgin-aunt,
Without whose aid she could not eat,
And yet who poison'd all her meat,
With gibe and sneer and taunt.
Yet of the heroine she 'd a share,—
She saved a lover from despair,
And granted all his wish, in spite
Of what she knew and felt was right:
But, heroine then no more,
She own'd the fault, and wept and pray'd,
And humbly took the parish aid,
And dwelt among the poor.

ELLEN ORFORD.[1]

The Widow's Cottage — Blind Ellen one — Hers not the Sorrows or Adventures of Heroines—What these are, first described — Deserted Wives; rash Lovers; courageous Damsels: in desolated Mansions; in grievous Perplexity—These Evils, however severe, of short Duration — Ellen's Story—Her Employment in Childhood—First Love; first Adventure; its miserable Termination—An Idiot Daughter—A Husband—Care in Business without Success—The Men's Despondency and its Effect—Their Children: how disposed of — One particularly unfortunate — Fate of the Daughter—Ellen keeps a School and is happy—becomes blind; loses her School—Her Consolations.

OBSERVE yon tenement, apart and small,
Where the wet pebbles shine upon the wall;
Where the low benches lean beside the door,
And the red paling bounds the space before;
Where thrift and lavender, and lad's-love[2] bloom,—
That humble dwelling is the widow's home;
There live a pair, for various fortunes known,
But the blind *Ellen* will relate her own;—
Yet ere we hear the story she can tell,
On prouder sorrows let us briefly dwell.

I 've often marvell'd, when, by night, by day,
I 've mark'd the manners moving in my way,
And heard the language and beheld the lives
Of lass and lover, goddesses and wives,
That books, which promise much of life to give,
Should show so little how we truly live.[3]

To me, it seems, their females and their men
Are but the creatures of the author's pen;
Nay, creatures borrow'd and again convey'd
From book to book—the shadows of a shade:
Life, if they 'd search, would show them many a change;
The ruin sudden, and the misery strange!

[5] It has been observed, that the story of the Parish Clerk has a bad moral, as it insinuates that there are certain temptations under which we cannot fail to yield, and, in fact, that we are puppets of an overpowering destiny. The author is sorry that any such inferences should be drawn from this relation, or from any other part of his book: what he meant to exhibit was, rather, the fall of a conceited and ostentatious man, who, when tempted, had not recourse to proper means of resistance, and an illustration of that scripture precept, "Let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Neither did the author, on this or on any other occasion, mean to deny the doctrine of seducing spirits, or one who is the chief of them; what he presumed to censure was the enthusiasm and conceit of those who take every absurd or perverse suggestion of their own spirits for the unquestionable temptation of the evil one, and every denial of a soliciting appetite for a conquest over that enemy of souls; thus perpetually administering fresh food for enthusiastic delight, and new triumph for spiritual pride.

[1] The Life of Ellen Orford, though sufficiently burdened with error and misfortune, has in it little besides which resembles those of the unhappy men in the preceding Letters, and is still more unlike that of Grimes, in a subsequent one. There is in this character cheerfulness and resignation, a more uniform piety, and an immovable trust in the aid of religion. This, with the light texture of the introductory part, will, I hope, take off from that idea of sameness which the repetition of crimes and distresses is likely to create.

[2] The lad's or boy's love, of some counties, is the plant southern-wood, the Artemisia Abrotanum of botanists.

[3] ["That 'le vrai n'est pas toujours vraisemblable,' we do not deny; but we are prepared to insist that, while 'le vrai' is the highest recommendation of the historian of real life, the 'vraisemblable' is the only legitimate province of the novelist who aims at improving the understanding or touching the heart."—GIFFORD.]

With more of grievous, base, and dreadful things,
Than novelists relate or poet sings: [4]
But they, who ought to look the world around,
Spy out a single spot in fairy-ground;
Where all, in turn, ideal forms behold,
And plots are laid and histories are told.

Time have I lent—I would their debt were less—
To flow'ry pages of sublime distress;
And to the heroine's soul-distracting fears
I early gave my sixpences and tears:
Oft have I travell'd in these tender tales,
To *Darnley-Cottages* [5] and *Maple-Vales*,[6]
And watch'd the fair-one from the first-born sigh,
When Henry pass'd and gazed in passing by;
Till I beheld them pacing in the park,
Close by a coppice where 't was cold and dark;
When such affection with such fate appear'd,
Want and a father to be shunn'd and fear'd,
Without employment, prospect, cot, or cash;
That I have judged th' heroic souls were rash.

Now shifts the scene,—the fair in tower confined,
In all things suffers but in change of mind;
Now woo'd by greatness to a bed of state,
Now deeply threaten'd with a dungeon's grate;
Till, suffering much, and being tried enough,
She shines, triumphant maid!—temptation-proof.

Then was I led to vengeful monks, who mix
With nymphs and swains, and play unpriestly tricks;
Then view'd banditti who in forest wide,
And cavern vast, indignant virgins hide;
Who, hemm'd with bands of sturdiest rogues about,
Find some strange succour, and come virgins out.

I've watch'd a wint'ry night on castle-walls,
I've stalk'd by moonlight through deserted halls,
And when the weary world was sunk to rest,
I've had such sights as—may not be express'd. [7]

Lo! that château, the western tower decay'd,
The peasants shun it,—they are all afraid;
For there was done a deed!—could walls reveal,
Or timbers tell it, how the heart would feel!
Most horrid was it:—for, behold, the floor
Has stain of blood, and will be clean no more:
Hark to the winds! which through the wide saloon
And the long passage send a dismal tune,—
Music that ghosts delight in; and now heed
Yon beauteous nymph, who must unmask the deed;
See! with majestic sweep she swims alone,
Through rooms, all dreary, guided by a groan:
Though windows rattle, and though tap'stries shake,
And the feet falter every step they take,
'Mid moans and gibing sprights she silent goes,
To find a something, which will soon expose
The villanies and wiles of her determined foes:
And, having thus adventured, thus endured,
Fame, wealth, and lover, are for life secured. [8]
Much have I fear'd, but am no more afraid,
When some chaste beauty, by some wretch betray'd,
Is drawn away with such distracted speed,
That she anticipates a dreadful deed:
Not so do I—Let solid walls impound
The captive fair, and dig a moat around;
Let there be brazen locks and bars of steel,
And keepers cruel, such as never feel;

[4] [—— "Truth is always strange—
Stranger than fiction. If it could be told,
How much would Novels gain by the exchange?" &c.
BYRON.
See *antè*, p. 110.]

[5] [The title of a novel, in three volumes, written by Mrs. Elizabeth Bonhote, the author also of 'Bungay Castle,' 'Ellen Woodley,' &c.]

[6] ['Maple Vale, or the History of Miss Sydney,' was published anonymously in 1790.]

[7] ["This species of composition cannot be traced higher than the 'Castle of Otranto,' by Horace Walpole. The following curious account of the origin and composition of this romance is given by the author himself, in a letter to a friend:—'Shall I confess to you what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled, like mine, with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it. Add, that I was very glad to think of anything rather than politics. In short, I was so impressed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening I wrote from the time I had drunk tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hand and fingers were so weary that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking, in the middle of a paragraph.' The work is declared by Mr. Walpole to be an attempt to blend the ancient romance and modern novel; but if by the ancient romance be meant the tales of chivalry, the extravagance of the 'Castle of Otranto' has no resemblance to their machinery. What analogy have skulls or skeletons, sliding panels, damp vaults, trap doors, and dismal apartments, to the tented field of chivalry and its airy enchantments?"—DUNLOP.]

[8] ["There is a certain class of novelists in whose drama nothing is real: their scenes are fancy, and their actors mere essences. The hero and heroine are generally paragons of courage, beauty, and virtue; they reside in such castles as never were built, in the midst of such forests as never grew, infested by such hordes of robbers and murderers as were never collected together. In the small number of those novels which have any plan or meaning, all is modelled on a certain principle, and every event predisposed to conduce to a certain object. Virtue is to be always persecuted, never overpowered, and, at the close, invariably rewarded; while vice, on the other hand, triumphant through all the previous scenes, is sure to be immolated, in the last, by the sword of retribution. This kind of novel is useless: the lessons it teaches are mere enthusiasm and romance; for the every-day occurrences of life there is inculcated a magnanimous contempt; and the mind, taught to neglect or despise the common duties of society, is either wound up to a pitch of heroism which never can be tried, or fixed in erroneous principles of morality and duty from which it is not easily reclaimed."—GIFFORD.

"On the contrary, in 'Sidney Biddulph,' by Mrs. Sheridan, every affliction is accumulated on the innocent heroine, in order to show that neither prudence nor foresight, nor the best disposition of the human heart, are sufficient to defend from the evils of life. This work, we are told, was written in opposition to the moral system, then fashionable, that virtue and happiness are constant concomitants, or, as expressed by Congreve, in the conclusion of the 'Mourning Bride,'—

'That blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And, though a late, a sure reward succeeds.'"
DUNLOP.]

With not a single note the purse supply,
And when she begs, let men and maids deny;
Be windows those from which she dares not fall,
And help so distant, 'tis in vain to call;
Still means of freedom will some power devise,
And from the baffled ruffian snatch his prize.

To Northern Wales, in some sequester'd spot,
I've follow'd fair *Louisa* to her cot:[9]
Where, then a wretched and deserted bride,
The injur'd fair-one wished from man to hide;
Till by her fond repenting Belville found,
By some kind chance—the straying of a hound,
He at her feet craved mercy, nor in vain,
For the relenting dove flew back again.

There 's something rapturous in distress, or, oh!
Could *Clementina* bear her lot of woe?
Or what she underwent could maiden undergo?
The day was fix'd; for so the lover sigh'd,
So knelt and craved, he couldn't be denied;
When, tale most dreadful! every hope adieu,—
For the fond lover is the brother too:
All other griefs abate; this monstrous grief
Has no remission, comfort, or relief;
Four ample volumes, through each page disclose,—
Good Heaven protect us! only woes on woes;
Till some strange means afford a sudden view
Of some vile plot, and every woe adieu![10]

Now, should we grant these beauties all endure
Severest pangs, they've still the speediest cure;
Before one charm be wither'd from the face,
Except the bloom, which shall again have place,
In wedlock ends each wish, in triumph all disgrace;
And life to come, we fairly may suppose,
One light, bright contrast to these wild dark woes.

These let us leave, and at her sorrows look,
Too often seen, but seldom in a book;
Let her who felt, relate them;—on her chair
The heroine sits—in former years, the fair,
Now aged and poor; but *Ellen Orford* knows
That we should humbly take what Heaven bestows.

" My father died—again my mother wed,
" And found the comforts of her life were fled;
" Her angry husband, vex'd through half his years
" By loss and troubles, fill'd her soul with fears:
" Their children many, and 't was my poor place
" To nurse and wait on all the infant-race;
" Labour and hunger were indeed my part,
" And should have strengthen'd an erroneous heart.

" Sore was the grief to see him angry come,
" And teased with business, make distress at home;
" The father's fury and the children's cries
" I soon could bear, but not my mother's sighs;
" For she look'd back on comforts, and would say,
" 'I wrong'd thee, Ellen,' and then turn away:
" Thus, for my age's good, my youth was tried,
" And this my fortune till my mother died.

" So, amid sorrow much and little cheer—
" A common case—I pass'd my twentieth year;
" For these are frequent evils; thousands share
" An equal grief—the like domestic care.

" Then in my days of bloom, of health, and youth,
" One, much above me, vow'd his love and truth:
" We often met, he dreading to be seen,
" And much I question'd what such dread might mean;
" Yet I believed him true; my simple heart
" And undirected reason took his part.

" Can he who loves me, whom I love, deceive?
" Can I such wrong of one so kind believe,
" Who lives but in my smile, who trembles when I grieve?

" He dared not marry, but we met to prove
" What sad encroachments and deceits has love:
" Weak that I was, when he, rebuked, withdrew,
" I let him see that I was wretched too;
" When less my caution, I had still the pain
" Of his or mine own weakness to complain.

" Happy the lovers class'd alike in life,
" Or happier yet the rich endowing wife;
" But most aggrieved the fond believing maid,
" Of her rich lover tenderly afraid:
" You judge th' event; for grievous was my fate,
" Painful to feel, and shameful to relate:
" Ah! sad it was my burthen to sustain,
" When the least misery was the dread of pain;
" When I have grieving told him my disgrace,
" And plainly mark'd indifference in his face.

" Hard! with these fears and terrors to behold
" The cause of all, the faithless lover, cold;
" Impatient grown at every wish denied,
" And barely civil, soothed and gratified;
" Peevish when urged to think of vows so strong,
" And angry when I spake of crime and wrong.
" All this I felt, and still the sorrow grew,
" Because I felt that I deserved it too,
" And begg'd my infant stranger to forgive
" The mother's shame, which in herself must live.

" When known that shame, I, soon expell'd from home,
" With a frail sister shared a hovel's gloom;
" There barely fed—(what could I more request?)
" My infant slumberer sleeping at my breast,

[9] "Louisa, or the Cottage on the Moor,' by Mrs. Helme; who also wrote 'The Farmer of Inglewood Forest,' 'St. Clair of the Isles,' and many other novels.]

[10] As this incident points out the work alluded to, I wish it to be remembered that the gloomy tenour, the querulous melancholy of the story, is all I censure. The language of the writer is often animated, and is, I believe, correct; the characters well drawn, and the manners described from real life; but the perpetual occurrence of sad events, the protracted list of teasing and perplexing mischances, joined with much waspish invective, unallayed by pleasantry or sprightliness, and these continued through many hundred pages, render publications, intended for amusement and executed with ability, heavy and displeasing: you find your favourite persons happy in the end; but they have teased you so much with their perplexities by the way, that you were frequently disposed to quit them in their distresses.

" I from my window saw his blooming bride,
" And my seducer smiling at her side;
" Hope lived till then; I sank upon the floor,
" And grief and thought and feeling were no more:
" Although revived, I judged that life would close,
" And went to rest, to wonder that I rose:
" My dreams were dismal,—wheresoe'er I stray'd,
" I seem'd ashamed, alarm'd, despised, betray'd;
" Always in grief, in guilt, disgraced, forlorn,
" Mourning that one so weak, so vile, was born;
" The earth a desert, tumult in the sea,
" The birds affrighten'd fled from tree to tree,
" Obscured the setting sun, and every thing like me.
" But Heav'n had mercy, and my need at length
" Urged me to labour, and renew'd my strength.
" I strove for patience as a sinner must,
" Yet felt th' opinion of the world unjust:
" There was my lover, in his joy esteem'd,
" And I, in my distress, as guilty deem'd;
" Yet sure, not all the guilt and shame belong
" To her who feels and suffers for the wrong:
" The cheat at play may use the wealth he 's won,
" But is not honour'd for the mischief done;
" The cheat in love may use each villain art,
" And boast the deed that breaks the victim's heart.

" Four years were past; I might again have found
" Some erring wish, but for another wound:
" Lovely my daughter grew, her face was fair,
" But no expression ever brighten'd there;
" I doubted long, and vainly strove to make
" Some certain meaning of the words she spake;
" But meaning there was none, and I survey'd
" With dread the beauties of my idiot-maid.
" Still I submitted;—Oh! 'tis meet and fit
" In all we feel to make the heart submit;
" Gloomy and calm my days, but I had then,
" It seem'd, attractions for the eyes of men:
" The sober master of a decent trade
" O'erlook'd my errors, and his offer made;
" Reason assented:—true, my heart denied,
" ' But thou,' I said, ' shalt be no more my guide.'

" When wed, our toil and trouble, pains and care,
" Of means to live procured us humble share;
" Five were our sons,—and we, though careful, found
" Our hopes declining as the year came round:
" For I perceived, yet would not soon perceive,
" My husband stealing from my view to grieve:
" Silent he grew, and when he spoke he sigh'd,
" And surly look'd, and peevishly replied:
" Pensive by nature, he had gone of late
" To those who preach'd of destiny and fate,
" Of things fore-doom'd, and of election-grace,
" And how in vain we strive to run our race;
" That all by works and moral worth we gain
" Is to perceive our care and labour vain;
" That still the more we pay, our debts the more remain:
" That he who feels not the mysterious call,
" Lies bound in sin, still grov'ling from the fall.
" My husband felt not:—our persuasion, prayer,
" And our best reason, darken'd his despair;
" His very nature changed; he now reviled
" My former conduct,—he reproach'd my child:
" He talked of bastard slips, and cursed his bed,
" And from our kindness to concealment fled;
" For ever to some evil change inclined,
" To every gloomy thought he lent his mind,
" Nor rest would give to us, nor rest himself could find;
" His son suspended saw him, long bereft
" Of life, nor prospect of revival left.

" With him died all our prospects, and once more
" I shared th' allotments of the parish poor;
" They took my children too, and this I know
" Was just and lawful, but I felt the blow:
" My idiot-maid and one unhealthy boy
" Were left, a mother's misery and her joy.

" Three sons I follow'd to the grave, and one—
" Oh! can I speak of that unhappy son?
" Would all the memory of that time were fled,
" And all those horrors, with my child, were dead!
" Before the world seduced him, what a grace
" And smile of gladness shone upon his face!
" Then, he had knowledge; finely would he write;
" Study to him was pleasure and delight;
" Great was his courage, and but few could stand
" Against the sleight and vigour of his hand;
" The maidens loved him;—when he came to die,
" No, not the coldest could suppress a sigh:
" Here I must cease—how can I say, my child
" Was by the bad of either sex beguiled?
" Worst of the bad—they taught him that the laws
" Made wrong and right; there was no other cause,
" That all religion was the trade of priests,
" And men, when dead, must perish like the beasts:—
" And he, so lively and so gay before——
" Ah; spare a mother—I can tell no more.

" Int'rest was made that they should not destroy
" The comely form of my deluded boy—
" But pardon came not; damp the place and deep
" Where he was kept, as they 'd a tiger keep;
" For he, unhappy! had before them all
" Vow'd he 'd escape, whatever might befall.

" He 'd means of dress, and dress'd beyond his means,
" And so to see him in such dismal scenes,
" I cannot speak it—cannot bear to tell
" Of that sad hour—I heard the passing bell!

" Slowly they went; he smiled, and look'd so smart,
" Yet sure he shudder'd when he saw the cart,
" And gave a look—until my dying day,
" That look will never from my mind away:
" Oft as I sit, and ever in my dreams,
" I see that look, and they have heard my screams.

" Now let me speak no more—yet all declared
" That one so young, in pity, should be spared.
" And one so manly;—on his graceful neck,
" That chains of jewels may be proud to deck,

" To a small mole a mother's lips have press'd—
" And there the cord—my breath is sore oppress'd.

" I now can speak again:—my elder boy
" Was that year drown'd,—a seaman in a hoy:
" He left a numerous race; of these would some
" In their young troubles to my cottage come,
" And these I taught—an humble teacher I—
" Upon their heavenly Parent to rely.

" Alas! I needed such reliance more:
" My idiot-girl, so simply gay before,
" Now wept in pain: some wretch had found a time,
" Depraved and wicked, for that coward crime;
" I had indeed my doubt, but I suppress'd
" The thought that day and night disturb'd my rest;
" She and that sick-pale brother—but why strive
" To keep the terrors of that time alive?

" The hour arrived, the new, th' undreaded pain,
" That came with violence, and yet came in vain.
" I saw her die: her brother too is dead;
" Nor own'd such crime—what is it that I dread?

" The parish aid withdrawn, I look'd around,
" And in my school a bless'd subsistence found—
" My winter-calm of life: to be of use
" Would pleasant thoughts and heavenly hopes produce;
" I loved them all; it soothed me to presage
" The various trials of their riper age,
" Then dwell on mine, and bless the Power who gave
" Pains to correct us, and remorse to save.

" Yes! these were days of peace, but they are past,—
" A trial came, I will believe, a last;
" I lost my sight, and my employment gone,
" Useless I live, but to the day live on;
" Those eyes, which long the light of heaven enjoy'd,
" Were not by pain, by agony destroy'd:
" My senses fail not all; I speak, I pray;
" By night my rest, my food I take by day;
" And, as my mind looks cheerful to my end,
" I love mankind, and call my GOD my friend."

LETTER XXI.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH.

Cœpis melius quàm desines; ultima primis
Cedunt. Dissimiles: hic vir et ille puer.
OVID. *Deianira Herculi.*[1]

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.—*Epistle to Timothy.*

ABEL KEENE.

Abel, a poor man, Teacher of a School of the lower Order; is placed in the Office of a Merchant; is alarmed by Discourses of the Clerks; unable to reply; becomes a Convert; dresses, drinks, and ridicules his former conduct—The Remonstrance of his Sister, a devout Maiden—Its Effect—The Merchant dies—Abel returns to Poverty unpitied; but relieved—His abject Condition—His Melancholy—He wanders about; is found—His own Account of himself, and the Revolutions in his Mind.

A QUIET, simple man was *Abel Keene*,
He meant no harm, nor did he often mean:
He kept a school of loud rebellious boys,
And growing old, grew nervous with the noise;
When a kind Merchant hired his useful pen,
And made him happiest of accompting men;
With glee he rose to every easy day,
When half the labour brought him twice the pay.

There were young clerks, and there the merchant's son,
Choice spirits all, who wish'd him to be one;
It must, no question, give them lively joy,
Hopes long indulged to combat and destroy;
At these they levelled all their skill and strength,—
He fell not quickly, but he fell at length:
They quoted books, to him both bold and new,
And scorn'd as fables all he held as true;
" Such monkish stories, and such nursery lies,"
That he was struck with terror and surprise.

" What! all his life had he the laws obey'd,
" Which they broke through and were not once afraid?
" Had he so long his evil passions check'd,
" And yet at last had nothing to expect?
" While they their lives in joy and pleasure led,
" And then had nothing at the end to dread?
" Was all his priest with so much zeal convey'd
" A part! a speech! for which the man was paid!
" And were his pious books, his solemn prayers,
" Not worth one tale of the admir'd Voltaire's?
" Then was it time, while yet some years remain'd,
" To drink untroubled and to think unchain'd,
" And on all pleasures, which his purse could give,
" Freely to seize, and while he lived, to live."

Much time he pass'd in this important strife,
The bliss or bane of his remaining life;
For converts all are made with care and grief,
And pangs attend the birth of unbelief;
Nor pass they soon;—with awe and fear he took
The flowery way, and cast back many a look.

The youths applauded much his wise design,
With weighty reasoning o'er their evening wine;
And much in private 't would their mirth improve,
To hear how Abel spake of life and love;
To hear him own what grievous pains it cost,
Ere the old saint was in the sinner lost,
Ere his poor mind, with every deed alarm'd,
By wit was settled, and by vice was charm'd.

For Abel enter'd in his bold career,
Like boys on ice, with pleasure and with fear;
Lingering, yet longing for the joy, he went,
Repenting now, now dreading to repent:
With awkward pace, and with himself at war,
Far gone, yet frighten'd that he went so far;

[1] [Your last deeds differ from your first success,
The infant makes the man appear the less.]

Oft for his efforts he 'd solicit praise,
And then proceed with blunders and delays:
The young more aptly passions' calls pursue,
But age and weakness start at scenes so new,
And tremble, when they 've done, for all they dared
to do.

At length example Abel's dread removed,
With small concern he sought the joys he loved;
Not resting here, he claim'd his share of fame,
And first their votary, then their wit became;
His jest was bitter and his satire bold,
When he his tales of formal brethren told;
What time with pious neighbours he discuss'd,
Their boasted treasure and their boundless trust:
" Such were our dreams," the jovial elder cried;
" Awake and live," his youthful friends replied.

Now the gay Clerk a modest drab despised,
And clad him smartly, as his friends advised;
So fine a coat upon his back he threw,
That not an alley-boy old Abel knew;
Broad polish'd buttons blazed that coat upon,
And just beneath the watch's trinkets shone,—
A splendid watch, that pointed out the time,
To fly from business and make free with crime:
The crimson waistcoat and the silken hose
Rank'd the lean man among the Borough beaux:
His raven hair he cropp'd with fierce disdain,
And light elastic locks encased his brain:
More pliant pupil who could hope to find,
So deck'd in person and so changed in mind?

When Abel walked the streets, with pleasant
mien
He met his friends, delighted to be seen;
And when he rode along the public way,
No beau so gaudy, and no youth so gay.

His pious sister, now an ancient maid,
For Abel fearing, first in secret pray'd;
Then thus in love and scorn her notions she con-
vey'd.

" Alas! my brother! can I see thee pace
" Hoodwink'd to hell, and not lament thy case,
" Nor stretch my feeble hand to stop thy headlong
race?
" Lo! thou art bound; a slave in Satan's chain,
" The righteous Abel turn'd the wretched Cain;
" His brother's blood against the murderer cried,
" Against thee thine, unhappy suicide!
" Are all our pious nights and peaceful days,
" Our evening readings and our morning praise,
" Our spirits' comfort in the trials sent,
" Our hearts' rejoicings in the blessings lent,
" All that o'er grief a cheering influence shed,
" Are these for ever and for ever fled?

" When in the years gone by, the trying years,
" When faith and hope had strife with wants and
fears,
" Thy nerves have trembled till thou couldst not
eat
" (Dress'd by this hand) thy mess of simple
meat;
" When, grieved by fastings, gall'd by fates severe,
" Slow pass'd the days of the successless year;

" Still in these gloomy hours, my brother then
" Had glorious views, unseen by prosperous men:
" And when thy heart has felt its wish denied,
" What gracious texts hast thou to grief applied;
" Till thou hast enter'd in thine humble bed,
" By lofty hopes and heavenly musings fed;
" Then I have seen thy lively looks express
" The spirit's comforts in the man's distress.

" Then didst thou cry, exulting, ' Yes, 't is fit,
" ' 'T is meet and right, my heart! that we submit:'
" And wilt thou, Abel, thy new pleasures weigh
" Against such triumphs?—Oh! repent and pray.

" What are thy pleasures?—with the gay to sit,
" And thy poor brain torment for awkward wit;
" All thy good thoughts (thou hat'st them) to
restrain,
" And give a wicked pleasure to the vain;
" Thy long, lean frame by fashion to attire,
" That lads may laugh and wantons may admire;
" To raise the mirth of boys, and not to see,
" Unhappy maniac! that they laugh at thee.

" These boyish follies, which alone the boy
" Can idly act, or gracefully enjoy,
" Add new reproaches to thy fallen state,
" And make men scorn what they would only hate.

" What pains, my brother, dost thou take to
prove
" A taste for follies which thou canst not love!
" Why do thy stiffening limbs the steed bestride—
" That lads may laugh to see thou canst not ride?
" And why (I feel the crimson tinge my cheek)
" Dost thou by night in Diamond-Alley sneak?

" Farewell! the parish will thy sister keep,
" Where she in peace shall pray and sing and
sleep,
" Save when for thee she mourns, thou wicked,
wandering sheep!
" When youth is fallen, there 's hope the young
may rise,
" But fallen age for ever hopeless lies;
" Torn up by storms, and placed in earth once
more,
" The younger tree may sun and soil restore;
" But when the old and sapless trunk lies low,
" No care or soil can former life bestow;
" Reserved for burning is the worthless tree—
" And what, O Abel! is reserved for thee?"

These angry words our hero deeply felt,
Though hard his heart, and indisposed to melt!
To gain relief he took a glass the more,
And then went on as careless as before;
Thenceforth, uncheck'd, amusements he partook,
And (save his ledger) saw no decent book;
Him found the Merchant punctual at his task,
And that perform'd, he 'd nothing more to ask;
He cared not how old Abel play'd the fool,
No master he, beyond the hours of school:
Thus they proceeding, had their wine and joke,
Till merchant Dixon felt a warning stroke,
And, after struggling half a gloomy week,
Left his poor Clerk another friend to seek.

Alas! the son, who led the saint astray,
Forgot the man whose follies made him gay;
He cared no more for Abel in his need,
Than Abel cared about his hackney steed:
He now, alas! had all his earnings spent,
And thus was left to languish and repent;
No school nor clerkship found he in the place,
Now lost to fortune, as before to grace.

For town-relief the grieving man applied,
And begg'd with tears what some with scorn denied;
Others look'd down upon the glowing vest,
And frowning, ask'd him at what price he dress'd?
Happy for him his country's laws are mild,
They must support him, though they still reviled;
Grieved, abject, scorn'd, insulted, and betray'd,
Of God unmindful, and of man afraid,—
No more he talk'd; 't was pain, 't was shame to speak,
His heart was sinking, and his frame was weak.
His sister died with such serene delight,
He once again began to think her right;
Poor like himself, the happy spinster lay,
And sweet assurance bless'd her dying-day:
Poor like the spinster, he, when death was nigh,
Assured of nothing, felt afraid to die.
The cheerful clerks who sometimes pass'd the door,
Just mention'd "Abel!" and then thought no more.
So Abel, pondering on his state forlorn,
Look'd round for comfort, and was chased by scorn.
And now we saw him on the beach reclined,
Or causeless walking in the wintry wind;
And when it raised a loud and angry sea,
He stood and gazed, in wretched reverie:
He heeded not the frost, the rain, the snow,
Close by the sea he walk'd alone and slow:
Sometimes his frame through many an hour he spread
Upon a tombstone, moveless as the dead;
And was there found a sad and silent place,
There would he creep with slow and measured pace;
Then would he wander by the river's side,
And fix his eyes upon the falling tide;
The deep dry ditch, the rushes in the fen,
And mossy crag-pits were his lodgings then:
There, to his discontented thought a prey,
The melancholy mortal pined away.

The neighb'ring poor at length began to speak
Of Abel's ramblings—he'd been gone a week;
They knew not where, and little care they took
For one so friendless and so poor to look.
At last a stranger, in a pedlar's shed,
Beheld him hanging—he had long been dead.
He left a paper, penn'd at sundry times,
Entitled thus—"My Groanings and my Crimes!"

"I was a Christian man, and none could lay
"Aught to my charge; I walk'd the narrow way:
"All then was simple faith, serene and pure,
"My hope was steadfast and my prospects sure;
"Then was I tried by want and sickness sore,
"But these I clapp'd my shield of faith before,
"And cares and wants and man's rebukes I bore:
"Alas! new foes assail'd me; I was vain,
"They stung my pride and they confused my brain:
"Oh! these deluders! with what glee they saw
"Their simple dupe transgress the righteous law;
"'T was joy to them to view that dreadful strife,
"When faith and frailty warr'd for more than life;
"So with their pleasures they beguiled the heart,
"Then with their logic they allay'd the smart;
"They proved (so thought I then) with reasons strong,
"That no man's feelings ever lead him wrong:
"And thus I went, as on the varnish'd ice,
"The smooth career of unbelief and vice.
"Oft would the youths, with sprightly speech and bold,
"Their witty tales of naughty priests unfold;
"'T was all a craft,' they said, 'a cunning trade;
"'Not she the priests, but priests Religion made.'
"So I believed:"—No, Abel! to thy grief:
So thou relinquish'dst all that was belief:—
"I grew as very flint, and when the rest
"Laugh'd at devotion, I enjoy'd the jest;
"But this all vanish'd like the morning-dew,
"When unemploy'd, and poor again I grew;
"Yea! I was doubly poor, for I was wicked too.

"The mouse that trespass'd and the treasure stole,
"Found his lean body fitted to the hole;
"Till, having fatted, he was forced to stay,
"And, fasting, starve his stolen bulk away:
"Ah! worse for me—grown poor, I yet remain
"In sinful bonds, and pray and fast in vain.

"At length I thought, although these friends of sin
"Have spread their net, and caught their prey therein;
"Though my hard heart could not for mercy call,
"Because though great my grief, my faith was small;
"Yet, as the sick on skilful men rely,
"The soul diseased may to a doctor fly.

"A famous one there was, whose skill had wrought
"Cures past belief, and him the sinners sought;
"Numbers there were defiled by mire and filth,
"Whom he recover'd by his goodly tilth:
"'Come then,' I said, 'let me the man behold,
"'And tell my case:'—I saw him and I told.

"With trembling voice, 'Oh! reverend sir,' I said,
"'I once believed, and I was then misled;
"'And now such doubts my sinful soul beset,
"'I dare not say that I'm a Christian yet;
"'Canst thou, good sir, by thy superior skill,
"'Inform my judgment and direct my will?
"'Ah! give thy cordial; let my soul have rest,
"'And be the outward man alone distress'd;
"'For at my state I tremble.'—'Tremble more,'
"Said the good man, 'and then rejoice therefore!
"'"T is good to tremble; prospects then are fair,
"'When the lost soul is plunged in deep despair:
"'Once thou wert simply honest, just, and pure,
"'Whole, as thou thought'st, and never wish'd a cure:
"'Now thou hast plunged in folly, shame, disgrace,
"'Now thou 'rt an object meet for healing grace;

" ' No merit thine, no virtue, hope, belief,
" ' Nothing hast thou, but misery, sin, and grief;
" ' The best, the only titles to relief.'

" ' What must I do,' I said, ' my soul to free?'—
" ' Do nothing, man; it will be done for thee.'
" ' But must I not, my reverend guide, believe?'—
" ' If thou art call'd, thou wilt the faith receive.'
" ' But I repent not.'—Angry he replied,
" ' If thou art call'd, though needest nought beside:
" ' Attend on us, and if 't is Heaven's decree,
" ' The call will come,—if not, ah! woe for thee.'

" There then I waited, ever on the watch,
" A spark of hope, a ray of light to catch;
" His words fell softly like the flakes of snow,
" But I could never find my heart o'erflow:
" He cried aloud, till in the flock began
" The sigh, the tear, as caught from man to man;
" They wept and they rejoiced, and there was I
" Hard as a flint, and as the desert dry:
" To me no tokens of the call would come,
" I felt my sentence, and received my doom;
" But I complain'd—' Let thy repinings cease,
" ' Oh! man of sin, for they thy guilt increase;
" ' It bloweth where it listeth;—die in peace.'
" —' In peace, and perish?' I replied; ' impart
" ' Some better comfort to a burthen'd heart.'
" ' Alas!' the priest return'd, ' can I direct
" ' The heavenly call?—Do I proclaim th' elect?
" ' Raise not thy voice against th' Eternal will,
" ' But take thy part with sinners, and be still.'[2]

" Alas, for me! no more the times of peace
" Are mine on earth—in death my pains may cease.

" Foes to my soul! ye young seducers, know
" What serious ills from your amusements flow;
" Opinions you with so much ease profess,
" O'erwhelm the simple and their minds oppress:

" Let such be happy, nor with reasons strong,
" That make them wretched, prove their notions wrong;
" Let them proceed in that they deem the way,
" Fast when they will, and at their pleasure pray:
" Yes, I have pity for my brethren's lot,
" And so had Dives, but it help'd him not:
" And is it thus?—I 'm full of doubts:—Adieu!
" Perhaps his reverence is mistaken too.'[3]

LETTER XXII.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH.

Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent, and every one did threat —
SHAKSPEARE. *Richard III.*

The times have been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end: but now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools.
Macbeth.

PETER GRIMES.[1]

The Father of Peter a Fisherman—Peter's early Conduct—His Grief for the old Man—He takes an Apprentice—The Boy's Suffering and Fate—A second Boy: how he died—Peter acquitted—A third Apprentice—A Voyage by Sea: the Boy does not return—Evil Report on Peter: he is tried and threatened—Lives alone—His Melancholy and incipient Madness—Is observed and visited—He escapes and is taken: is lodged in a parish-house: Women attend and watch him—He speaks in a Delirium: grows more collected—His Account of his Feelings and visionary Terrors previous to his Death.

Old *Peter Grimes* made fishing his employ,
His wife he cabin'd with him and his boy,
And seem'd that life laborious to enjoy:

[2] In a periodical work [the Eclectic Review for June, 1810,] the preceding dialogue is pronounced to be a most abominable caricature, if meant to be applied to Calvinists in general, and greatly distorted, if designed for an individual; now the author, in his preface, has declared, that he takes not upon him the censure of any sect or society for their opinions; and the lines themselves evidently point to an individual, whose sentiments they very fairly represent, without any distortion whatsoever. In a pamphlet entitled 'A Cordial for a Sin-despairing Soul,' originally written by a teacher of religion, and lately republished by another teacher of greater notoriety, the reader is informed that after he had full assurance of his salvation, the Spirit entered particularly into the subject with him; and, among many other matters of like nature, assured him that "his sins were fully and freely forgiven, as if they had never been committed; not for any act done by him, whether believing in Christ, or repenting of sin; nor yet for the sorrows and miseries he endured, nor for any service he should be called upon in his militant state, but for his own name and for his glory's sake," &c. And the whole drift and tenour of the book is to the same purpose, viz. the uselessness of all religious duties, such as prayer, contrition, fasting, and good works: he shows the evil done by reading such books as the 'Whole Duty of Man,' and the 'Practice of Piety,' and complains heavily of his relation, an Irish bishop, who wanted him to join with the household in family prayer; in fact, the whole work inculcates that sort of quietism which this dialogue alludes to, and that without any recommendation of attendance on the teachers of the Gospel, but rather holding forth encouragement to the supineness of man's nature; by the information that he in vain looks for acceptance by the employment of his talents, and that his hopes of glory are rather extinguished than raised by any application to the means of grace.

[3] It has been a subject of greater vexation to me than such trifle ought to be, that I could not, without destroying all appearance of arrangement, separate these melancholy narratives, and place the fallen Clerk in Office at a greater distance from the Clerk of the Parish, especially as they resembled each other in several particulars; both being tempted, seduced, and wretched. Yet are there, I conceive, considerable marks of distinction: their guilt is of different kind; nor would either have committed the offence of the other. The Clerk of the Parish could break the commandment, but he could not have been induced to have disowned an article of that creed for which he had so bravely contended, and on which he fully relied; and the upright mind of the Clerk in Office would have secured him from being guilty of wrong and robbery, though his weak and vacillating intellect could not preserve him from infidelity and profaneness. Their melancholy is nearly alike, but not its consequences. *Jachin* retained his belief, and though he hated life, he could never be induced to quit it voluntarily; but *Abel* was driven to terminate his misery in a way which the unfixedness of his religious opinions rather accelerated than retarded. I am, therefore, not without hope, that the more observant of my readers will perceive many marks of discrimination in these characters.

[1] [The original of Peter Grimes was an old fisherman of

To town came quiet Peter with his fish,
And had of all a civil word and wish.
He left his trade upon the Sabbath-day,
And took young Peter in his hand to pray:
But soon the stubborn boy from care broke loose,
At first refused, then added his abuse:
His father's love he scorn'd, his power defied,
But being drunk, wept sorely when he died.

Yes! then he wept, and to his mind there came
Much of his conduct, and he felt the shame,—
How he had oft the good old man reviled,
And never paid the duty of a child;
How, when the father in his Bible read,
He in contempt and anger left the shed:
"It is the word of life," the parent cried;
—"This is the life itself," the boy replied.
And while old Peter in amazement stood,
Gave the hot spirit to his boiling blood:—
How he, with oath and furious speech, began
To prove his freedom and assert the man;
And when the parent check'd his impious rage,
How he had cursed the tyranny of age,—
Nay, once had dealt the sacrilegious blow
On his bare head, and laid his parent low;
The father groan'd—"If thou art old," said he,
"And hast a son—thou wilt remember me:
"Thy mother left me in a happy time,
"Thou kill'dst not her—Heav'n spares the double crime."

On an inn-settle, in his maudlin grief,
This he revolved, and drank for his relief.

Now lived the youth in freedom, but debarr'd
From constant pleasure, and he thought it hard;
Hard that he could not every wish obey,
But must awhile relinquish ale and play;
Hard! that he could not to his cards attend,
But must acquire the money he would spend.

With greedy eye he look'd on all he saw,
He knew not justice, and he laugh'd at law;
On all he mark'd, he stretch'd his ready hand;
He fish'd by water and he filch'd by land:
Oft in the night has Peter dropp'd his oar,
Fled from his boat, and sought for prey on shore;
Oft up the hedge-row glided, on his back
Bearing the orchard's produce in a sack,
Or farm-yard load, tugg'd fiercely from the stack;
And as these wrongs to greater numbers rose,
The more he look'd on all men as his foes.

He built a mud-wall'd hovel, where he kept
His various wealth, and there he oft-times slept;
But no success could please his cruel soul,
He wish'd for one to trouble and control;
He wanted some obedient boy to stand
And bear the blow of his outrageous hand;
And hoped to find in some propitious hour
A feeling creature subject to his power.

Peter had heard there were in London then,—
Still have they being!—workhouse-clearing men,
Who, undisturb'd by feelings just or kind,
Would parish-boys to needy tradesmen bind:
They in their want a trifling sum would take,
And toiling slaves of piteous orphans make.

Such Peter sought, and when a lad was found,
The sum was dealt him, and the slave was bound.
Some few in town observed in Peter's trap
A boy, with jacket blue and woollen cap;
But none inquired how Peter used the rope,
Or what the bruise that made the stripling stoop;
None could the ridges on his back behold,
None sought him shiv'ring in the winter's cold;
None put the question,—Peter, dost thou give
"The boy his food?—What, man! the lad must live:
"Consider, Peter, let the child have bread,
"He 'll serve thee better if he 's stroked and fed."
None reason'd thus—and some, on hearing cries,
Said calmly, "Grimes is at his exercise."

Pinn'd, beaten, cold, pinch'd, threaten'd, and abused—
His efforts punish'd and his food refused,—
Awake tormented,—soon aroused from sleep,—
Struck if he wept, and yet compell'd to weep,
The trembling boy dropp'd down and strove to pray,
Received a blow, and trembling turn'd away,
Or sobb'd and hid his piteous face;—while he,
The savage master, grinn'd in horrid glee:
He 'd now the power he ever loved to show,
A feeling being subject to his blow.

Thus lived the lad, in hunger, peril, pain,
His tears despised, his supplications vain:
Compell'd by fear to lie, by need to steal,
His bed uneasy and unbless'd his meal,
For three sad years the boy his tortures bore,
And then his pains and trials were no more.

"How died he, Peter?" when the people said,
He growl'd—"I found him lifeless in his bed;"
Then tried for softer tone, and sigh'd, "Poor Sam is dead."
Yet murmurs were there, and some questions ask'd—
How he was fed, how punish'd, and how task'd?
Much they suspected, but they little proved,
And Peter pass'd untroubled and unmoved.

Another boy with equal ease was found,
The money granted, and the victim bound;
And what his fate?—One night it chanced he fell
From the boat's mast and perish'd in her well,
Where fish were living kept, and where the boy
(So reason'd men) could not himself destroy:—

"Yes! so it was," said Peter, "in his play,
"(For he was idle both by night and day,)
"He climb'd the main-mast and then fell below;"—
Then show'd his corpse, and pointed to the blow.
"What said the jury?"—they were long in doubt,
But sturdy Peter faced the matter out:

Aldborough, while Mr. Crabbe was practising there as a surgeon. He had a succession of apprentices from London, and a certain sum with each. As the boys all disappeared under circumstances of strong suspicion, the man was warned by some of the principal inhabitants that if another followed in like manner, he should certainly be charged with murder.]

So they dismissed him, saying at the time,
" Keep fast your hatchway when you 've boys who climb."
This hit the conscience, and he colour'd more
Than for the closest questions put before.

Thus all his fears the verdict set aside,
And at the slave-shop Peter still applied.

Then came a boy, of manners soft and mild,—
Our seamen's wives with grief beheld the child;
All thought (the poor themselves) that he was one
Of gentle blood, some noble sinner's son,
Who had, belike, deceived some humble maid,
Whom he had first seduced and then betray'd:—
However this, he seem'd a gracious lad,
In grief submissive, and with patience sad.

Passive he labour'd, till his slender frame
Bent with his loads, and he at length was lame:
Strange that a frame so weak could bear so long
The grossest insult and the foulest wrong;
But there were causes—in the town they gave
Fire, food, and comfort, to the gentle slave;
And though stern Peter, with a cruel hand,
And knotted rope, enforced the rude command,
Yet he consider'd what he 'd lately felt,
And his vile blows with selfish pity dealt.

One day such draughts the cruel fisher made,
He could not vend them in his borough-trade,
But sail'd for London-mart: the boy was ill,
But ever humbled to his master's will;
And on the river, where they smoothly sail'd,
He strove with terror and awhile prevail'd;
But new to danger on the angry sea,
He clung affrighten'd to his master's knee:
The boat grew leaky and the wind was strong,
Rough was the passage and the time was long;
His liquor fail'd, and Peter's wrath arose,—
No more is known—the rest we must suppose,
Or learn of Peter:—Peter says, he " spied
" The stripling's danger and for harbour tried;
" Meantime the fish, and then th' apprentice died."

The pitying women raised a clamour round,
And weeping said, " Thou hast thy 'prentice drown'd."

Now the stern man was summon'd to the hall,
To tell his tale before the burghers all:
He gave th' account; profess'd the lad he loved,
And kept his brazen features all unmoved.

The mayor himself with tone severe replied,—
" Henceforth with thee shall never boy abide;
" Hire thee a freeman, whom thou durst not beat,
" But who, in thy despite, will sleep and eat:
" Free thou art now!—again shouldst thou appear,
" Thou 'lt find thy sentence, like thy soul, severe."

Alas! for Peter not a helping hand,
So was he hated, could he now command;
Alone he row'd his boat, alone he cast
His nets beside, or made his anchor fast:
To hold a rope or hear a curse was none,—
He toil'd and rail'd; he groan'd and swore alone.

Thus by himself compell'd to live each day,
To wait for certain hours the tide's delay;
At the same time the same dull views to see,
The bounding marsh-bank and the blighted tree;
The water only, when the tides were high,
When low, the mud half cover'd and half-dry;
The sun-burnt tar that blisters on the planks,
And bank-side stakes in their uneven ranks;
Heaps of entangled weeds that slowly float,
As the tide rolls by the impeded boat.

When tides were neap, and, in the sultry day,
Through the tall bounding mud-banks made their way,
Which on each side rose swelling, and below
The dark warm flood ran silently and slow;
There anchoring, Peter chose from man to hide,
There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
In its hot slimy channel slowly glide;
Where the small eels that left the deeper way
For the warm shore, within the shallows play;
Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud,
Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood;—
Here dull and hopeless he 'd lie down and trace
How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their crooked race,
Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye;
What time the sea-birds to the marsh would come,
And the loud bittern, from the bull-rush home,
Gave from the salt ditch side the bellowing boom:
He nursed the feelings these dull scenes produce,
And loved to stop beside the opening sluice;
Where the small stream, confined in narrow bound,
Ran with a dull, unvaried, sadd'ning sound;
Where all, presented to the eye or ear,
Oppress'd the soul with misery, grief, and fear.

Besides these objects, there were places three,
Which Peter seem'd with certain dread to see;
When he drew near them he would turn from each,
And loudly whistle till he pass'd the reach.[2]

A change of scene to him brought no relief;
In town, 't was plain, men took him for a thief:
The sailors' wives would stop him in the street,
And say, " Now, Peter, thou 'st no boy to beat:"
Infants at play when they perceived him, ran,
Warning each other—" That 's the wicked man:"
He growl'd an oath, and in an angry tone
Cursed the whole place and wish'd to be alone.

Alone he was, the same dull scenes in view,
And still more gloomy in his sight they grew:
Though man he hated, yet employ'd alone
At bootless labour, he would swear and groan,

[2] The reaches in a river are those parts which extend from point to point. Johnson has not the word precisely in this sense; but it is very common, and, I believe, used wheresoever a navigable river can be found in this country. ["A reach is the line or distance comprehended between any two points, or stations, on the banks of a river, wherein the current flows in a straight uninterrupted course, as Woolwich Reach," &c.—BURNEY.]

Cursing the shoals that glided by the spot,
And gulls that caught them when his arts could not.

Cold nervous tremblings shook his sturdy frame,
And strange disease—he couldn't say the name;
Wild were his dreams, and oft he rose in fright,
Waked by his view of horrors in the night,—
Horrors that would the sternest minds amaze,
Horrors that demons might be proud to raise:
And though he felt forsaken, grieved at heart,
To think he lived from all mankind apart;
Yet, if a man approach'd, in terrors he would start.

A winter pass'd since Peter saw the town,
And summer lodgers were again come down;
These, idly curious, with their glasses spied
The ships in bay as anchor'd for the tide,—
The river's craft,—the bustle of the quay,—
And sea-port views, which landmen love to see.

One, up the river, had a man and boat
Seen day by day, now anchor'd, now afloat;
Fisher he seem'd, yet used no net nor hook;
Of sea-fowl swimming by no heed he took,
But on the gliding waves still fix'd his lazy look:
At certain stations he would view the stream,
As if he stood bewilder'd in a dream,
Or that some power had chain'd him for a time,
To feel a curse or meditate on crime.

This known, some curious, some in pity went,
And others question'd—"Wretch, dost thou repent?"
He heard, he trembled, and in fear resign'd
His boat: new terror fill'd his restless mind;
Furious he grew, and up the country ran,
And there they seized him—a distemper'd man:—
Him we received, and to a parish-bed,
Follow'd and cursed, the groaning man was led.

Here when they saw him, whom they used to shun,
A lost, lone man, so harass'd and undone;
Our gentle females, ever prompt to feel,
Perceived compassion on their anger steal;
His crimes they could not from their memories blot,
But they were grieved, and trembled at his lot.

A Priest too came, to whom his words are told;
And all the signs they shudder'd to behold.

"Look! look!" they cried; "his limbs with horror shake,
"And as he grinds his teeth, what noise they make!
"How glare his angry eyes, and yet he's not awake:
"See! what cold drops upon his forehead stand,
"And how he clenches that broad bony hand."

The Priest attending, found he spoke at times
As one alluding to his fears and crimes;
"It was the fall," he mutter'd, "I can show
"The manner how,—I never struck a blow:"—
And then aloud,—"Unhand me, free my chain;
"On oath he fell—it struck him to the brain:—
"Why ask my father?—that old man will swear
"Against my life; besides, he wasn't there:
"What, all agreed?—Am I to die to-day?—
"My Lord, in mercy give me time to pray."

Then as they watch'd him, calmer he became,
And grew so weak he couldn't move his frame,
But murmuring spake—while they could see and hear
The start of terror and the groan of fear;
See the large dew-beads on his forehead rise,
And the cold death-drop glaze his sunken eyes:
Nor yet he died, but with unwonted force
Seem'd with some fancied being to discourse:
He knew not us, or with accustom'd art
He hid the knowledge, yet exposed his heart;
'T was part confession and the rest defence,
A madman's tale, with gleams of waking sense.

"I'll tell you all," he said, "the very day
"When the old man first placed them in my way:
"My father's spirit—he who always tried
"To give me trouble, when he lived and died—
"When he was gone he could not be content
"To see my days in painful labour spent,
"But would appoint his meetings, and he made
"Me watch at these, and so neglect my trade.

"'T was one hot noon, all silent, still, serene,
"No living being had I lately seen;
"I paddled up and down and dipp'd my net,
"But (such his pleasure) I could nothing get,—
"A father's pleasure, when his toil was done,
"To plague and torture thus an only son!
"And so I sat and look'd upon the stream,
"How it ran on, and felt as in a dream:
"But dream it was not: No!—I fix'd my eyes
"On the mid stream and saw the spirits rise:
"I saw my father on the water stand,
"And hold a thin pale boy in either hand;
"And there they glided ghastly on the top
"Of the salt flood, and never touch'd a drop:
"I would have struck them, but they knew th' intent,
"And smiled upon the oar, and down they went.

"Now, from that day, whenever I began
"To dip my net, there stood the hard old man—
"He and those boys: I humbled me and pray'd
"They would be gone; they heeded not, but stay'd:
"Nor could I turn, nor would the boat go by,
"But, gazing on the spirits, there was I:
"They bade me leap to death, but I was loth to die:
"And every day, as sure as day arose,
"Would these three spirits meet me ere the close;
"To hear and mark them daily was my doom,
"And 'Come,' they said, with weak, sad voices, 'come.'
"To row away, with all my strength I tried,
"But there were they, hard by me in the tide,
"The three unbodied forms—and 'Come,' still 'come,' they cried.

"Fathers should pity—but this old man shook
"His hoary locks, and froze me by a look:

" Thrice, when I struck them, through the water came
" A hollow groan, that weaken'd all my frame:
" ' Father!' said I, ' have mercy:'—he replied,
" I know not what—the angry spirit lied,—
" ' Didst thou not draw thy knife?' said he:—
"'T was true,
" But I had pity and my arm withdrew:
" He cried for mercy, which I kindly gave,
" But he has no compassion in his grave.

" There were three places, where they ever rose,—
" The whole long river has not such as those—
" Places accursed, where, if a man remain,
" He 'll see the things which strike him to the brain;
" And there they made me on my paddle lean,
" And look at them for hours;—accursed scene!
" When they would glide to that smooth eddy-space,
" Then bid me leap and join them in the place;
" And at my groans each little villain sprite
" Enjoy'd my pains and vanish'd in delight.

" In one fierce summer-day, when my poor brain
" Was burning hot, and cruel was my pain,
" Then came this father-foe, and there he stood
" With his two boys again upon the flood:
" There was more mischief in their eyes, more glee
" In their pale faces, when they glared at me:[3]
" Still they did force me on the oar to rest,
" And when they saw me fainting and oppress'd,
" He with his hand, the old man, scoop'd the flood,
" And there came flame about him mix'd with blood;
" He bade me stoop and look upon the place,
" Then flung the hot-red liquor in my face;
" Burning it blazed, and then I roar'd for pain,
" I thought the demons would have turn'd my brain.

" Still there they stood, and forced me to behold
" A place of horrors—they can not be told—
" Where the flood open'd, there I heard the shriek
" Of tortured guilt—no earthly tongue can speak:
" ' All days alike! for ever!' did they say,
" ' And unremitted torments every day'—
" Yes, so they said "—But here he ceased, and gazed
On all around, affrighten'd and amazed;
And still he tried to speak, and look'd in dread
Of frighten'd females gathering round his bed;
Then dropp'd exhausted, and appear'd at rest,
Till the strong foe the vital powers possess'd;
Then with an inward, broken voice he cried,
" Again they come!" and mutter'd as he died.[4]

LETTER XXIII.

Pœna autem vehemens ac multò sævior illis,
Quas et Cæditius gravis invenit aut Rhadamanthus,
Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem.
JUV. *Sat.* xiii.[1]

—— Think my former state a happy dream,
From which awaked, the truth of what we are
Shows us but this,—I am sworn brother now
To grim Necessity, and he and I
Will keep a league till death. *Richard II.*

PRISONS.[2]

The Mind of Man accommodates itself to all Situations; Prisons otherwise would be intolerable — Debtors: their different kinds: three particularly described; others more briefly—An arrested Prisoner: his Account of his Feelings and his Situation—The Alleviations of a Prison—Prisoners for Crimes—Two condemned: a vindictive Female: a Highwayman—The Interval between Condemnation and Execution—His Feelings as the Time approaches—His Dream.

'T is well—that Man to all the varying states
Of good and ill his mind accommodates;
He not alone progressive grief sustains,
But soon submits to unexperienced pains:

[3] [" Continuò templum, et violati numinis aras," &c.
JUV. *Sat.* xiii.

—— " sudden before his eyes,
The violated fane and altar rise;
And (what disturbs him most) that injured shade,
In more than mortal majesty array'd,
Frowns on the wretch, alarms his treacherous rest,
And wrings the dreadful secret from his breast."
GIFFORD.]

[4] The character of Grimes, his obduracy and apparent want of feeling, his gloomy kind of misanthropy, the progress of his madness, and the horrors of his imagination, I must leave to the judgment and observation of my readers. The mind here exhibited is one untouched by pity, unstung by remorse, and uncorrected by shame; yet is this hardihood of temper and spirit broken by want, disease, solitude, and disappointment: and he becomes the victim of a distempered and horror-stricken fancy. It is evident, therefore, that no feeble vision, no half-visible ghost, not the momentary glance of an unbodied being, nor the half-audible voice of an invisible one, would be created by the continual workings of distress on a mind so depraved and flinty. The ruffian of Mr. Scott* has a mind of this nature; he has no shame or remorse, but the corrosion of hopeless want, the wasting of unabating disease, and the gloom of unvaried solitude, will have their effect on every nature; and the harder that nature is, and the longer time required to work upon it, so much the more strong and indelible is the impression. This is all the reason I am able to give, why a man of feeling so dull should yet become insane, and why the visions of his distempered brain should be of so horrible a nature.

[1] [" Trust me, no tortures which the poets feign,
Can match the fierce, the unutterable pain
He feels, who, night and day, devoid of rest,
Carries his own accuser in his breast."—GIFFORD.]

[2] That a Letter on Prisons should follow the narratives of such characters as Keene and Grimes is unfortunate, but not to be easily avoided. I confess it is not pleasant to be detained so long by subjects so repulsive to the feelings of many as the sufferings of mankind; but, though I assuredly would have altered this arrangement, had I been able to have

* —— was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed;
One whose brute feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.—MARMION.

Change after change, all climes his body bears;
His mind repeated shocks of changing cares:
Faith and fair Virtue arm the nobler breast;
Hope and mere want of feeling aid the rest.

Or who could bear to lose the balmy air
Of summer's breath, from all things fresh and fair,
With all that man admires or loves below;
All earth and water, wood and vale bestow,
Where rosy pleasures smile, whence real blessings flow;
With sight and sound of every kind that lives,
And crowning all with joy that freedom gives?

Who could from these, in some unhappy day,
Bear to be drawn by ruthless arms away,
To the vile nuisance of a noisome room,
Where only insolence and misery come?
(Save that the curious will by chance appear,
Or some in pity drop a fruitless tear);
To a damp Prison, where the very sight
Of the warm sun is favour and not right;
Where all we hear or see the feelings shock,
The oath and groan, the fetter and the lock?

Who could bear this and live?—Oh! many a year
All this is borne, and miseries more severe;
And some there are, familiar with the scene,
Who live in mirth, though few become serene.

Far as I might the inward man perceive,
There was a constant effort—not to grieve:
Not to despair, for better days would come,
And the freed debtor smile again at home:
Subdued his habits, he may peace regain,
And bless the woes that were not sent in vain.

Thus might we class the Debtors here confined,
The more deceived, the more deceitful kind;
Here are the guilty race, who mean to live
On credit, that credulity will give;
Who purchase, conscious they can never pay;
Who know their fate, and traffic to betray;
On whom no pity, fear, remorse, prevail,
Their aim a statute, their resource a jail;—
These are the public spoilers we regard,
No dun so harsh, no creditor so hard.

A second kind are they, who truly strive
To keep their sinking credit long alive;
Success, nay prudence, they may want, but yet
They would be solvent, and deplore a debt;
All means they use, to all expedients run,
And are by slow, sad steps, at last undone:
Justly, perhaps, you blame their want of skill,
But mourn their feelings and absolve their will.

There is a Debtor, who his trifling *all*
Spreads in a shop; it would not fill a stall:
There at one window his temptation lays,
And in new modes disposes and displays:
Above the door you shall his name behold,
And what he vends in ample letters told,
The words 'Repository,' 'Warehouse,' all
He uses to enlarge concerns so small:
He to his goods assigns some beauty's name,
Then in her reign, and hopes they'll share her fame,
And talks of credit, commerce, traffic, trade,
As one important by their profit made;
But who can paint the vacancy, the gloom,
And spare dimensions of one backward room?
Wherein he dines, if so 't is fit to speak
Of one day's herring and the morrow's steak:
An anchorite in diet, all his care
Is to display his stock and vend his ware.

Long waiting hopeless, then he tries to meet
A kinder fortune in a distant street;
There he again displays, increasing yet
Corroding sorrow and consuming debt:
Alas! he wants the requisites to rise—
The true connections, the availing ties:
They who proceed on certainties advance,
These are not times when men prevail by chance;
But still he tries, till, after years of pain,
He finds, with anguish, he has tried in vain.
Debtors are these on whom 't is hard to press,
'T is base, impolitic, and merciless.

To these we add a miscellaneous kind,
By pleasure, pride, and indolence confined;
Those whom no calls, no warnings could divert,
The unexperienced and the inexpert;
The builder, idler, schemer, gamester, sot,—
The follies different, but the same their lot;
Victims of horses, lasses, drinking, dice,
Of every passion, humour, whim, and vice.

See! that sad Merchant, who but yesterday
Had a vast household in command and pay;
He now entreats permission to employ
A boy he needs, and then entreats the boy.

And there sits one improvident but kind,
Bound for a friend, whom honour could not bind;
Sighing, he speaks to any who appear,
"A treach'rous friend—'t was that which sent me here:"

done it by substituting a better, yet am I not of opinion that my verses, or, indeed, the verses of any other person, can so represent the evils and distresses of life as to make any material impression on the mind, and much less any of injurious nature. Alas! sufferings real, evident, continually before us, have not effects very serious or lasting, even in the minds of the more *reflecting* and compassionate; *nor*, indeed, does it *seem right* that the pain caused by sympathy should serve for more than a stimulus to benevolence. If, then, the strength and solidity of truth placed before our eyes have effect so feeble and transitory, I need not be very apprehensive that my representations of Poor-houses and Prisons, of wants and sufferings, however faithfully taken, will excite any feelings which can be seriously lamented. It has always been held as a salutary exercise of the mind to contemplate the evils and miseries of our nature: I am not therefore without hope that even this gloomy subject of Imprisonment, and more especially the Dream of the Condemned Highwayman, will excite in some minds that mingled pity and abhorrence which, while it is not unpleasant to the feelings, is *useful* in its operation. It ties and binds us to all mankind by sensations common to us all, and in some degree connects us, without degradation, *even to the most* miserable and guilty of our fellow-men.

" I was too kind,—I thought I could depend
" On his bare word—he was a treach'rous friend."

A Female too !—it is to her a home,
She came before—and she again will come:
Her friends have pity; when their anger drops,
They take her home;—she 's tried her schools and shops—
Plan after plan;—but fortune would not mend,
She to herself was still the treach'rous friend;
And wheresoe'er began, all here was sure to end:
And there she sits, as thoughtless and as gay
As if she 'd means, or not a debt to pay—
Or knew to-morrow she 'd be call'd away—
Or felt a shilling and could dine to-day.

While thus observing, I began to trace
The sober'd features of a well-known face—
Looks once familiar, manners form'd to please,
And all illumined by a heart at ease:
But fraud and flattery ever claim'd a part
(Still unresisted) of that easy heart;
But he at length beholds me—" Ah! my friend!
" And have thy pleasures this unlucky end?"

" Too sure," he said, and smiling as he sigh'd;
" I went astray, though Prudence seem'd my guide;
" All she proposed I in my heart approved,
" And she was honour'd, but my pleasure loved—
" Pleasure, the mistress to whose arms I fled,
" From wife-like lectures angry Prudence read.

" Why speak the madness of a life like mine,
" The powers of beauty, novelty, and wine?
" Why paint the wanton smile, the venal vow,
" Or friends whose worth I can appreciate now;
" Oft I perceived my fate, and then could say,
" I 'll think to-morrow, I must live to-day:
" So am I here—I own the laws are just—
" And here, where thought is painful, think I must:
" But speech is pleasant; this discourse with thee
" Brings to my mind the sweets of liberty,
" Breaks on the sameness of the place, and gives
" The doubtful heart conviction that it lives.

" Let me describe my anguish in the hour
" When law detain'd me and I felt its power.

" When, in that shipwreck, this I found my shore,
" And join'd the wretched, who were wreck'd before;
" When I perceived each feature in the face,
" Pinch'd through neglect or turbid by disgrace;
" When in these wasting forms affliction stood
" In my afflicted view, it chill'd my blood;—
" And forth I rush'd, a quick retreat to make,
" Till a loud laugh proclaim'd the dire mistake:
" But when the groan had settled to a sigh,
" When gloom became familiar to the eye,
" When I perceive how others seem to rest,
" With every evil rankling in my breast,—
" Led by example, I put on the man,
" Sing off my sighs, and trifle as I can.

" Homer! nay Pope! (for never will I seek
" Applause for learning—nought have I with Greek)
" Gives us the secrets of his pagan hell,
" Where ghost with ghost in sad communion dwell;
" Where shade meets shade, and round the gloomy meads
" They glide, and speak of old heroic deeds,—
" What fields they conquer'd, and what foes they slew,
" And sent to join the melancholy crew.[3]
" When a new spirit in that world was found,
" A thousand shadowy forms came flitting round:
" Those who had known him, fond inquiries made,—
" 'Of all we left, inform us, gentle shade,
" 'Now as we lead thee in our realms to dwell,
" 'Our twilight groves, and meads of asphodel.'[4]

" What paints the poet, is our station here,
" Where we like ghosts and flitting shades appear:
" This is the hell he sings, and here we meet,
" And former deeds to new-made friends repeat;
" Heroic deeds, which here obtain us fame,
" And are in fact the causes why we came:
" Yes! this dim region is old Homer's hell,
" Abate but groves and meads of asphodel.
" Here, when a stranger from your world we spy,
" We gather round him and for news apply;
" He hears unheeding, nor can speech endure,
" But shivering gazes on the vast obscure:
" We smiling pity, and by kindness show
" We felt his feelings and his terrors know;
" Then speak of comfort—time will give him sight,
" Where now 't is dark; where now 't is woe—delight.

" 'Have hope,' we say, 'and soon the place to thee
" 'Shall not a prison but a castle be:
" 'When to the wretch whom care and guilt confound,
" 'The world 's a prison, with a wider bound;
" 'Go where he may, he feels himself confined,
" 'And wears the fetters of an abject mind.'

" But now adieu! those giant-keys appear,
" Thou art not worthy to be inmate here:
" Go to thy world, and to the young declare
" What we, our spirits and employments, are;
" Tell them how we the ills of life endure,
" Our empire stable, and our state secure;
" Our dress, our diet, for their use describe,
" And bid them haste to join the gen'rous tribe:
" Go to thy world, and leave us here to dwell,
" Who to its joys and comforts bid farewell."

Farewell to these; but other scenes I view,
And other griefs, and guilt of deeper hue;
Where Conscience gives to outward ills her pain,
Gloom to the night, and pressure to the chain:
Here separate cells awhile in misery keep
Two doom'd to suffer: there they strive for sleep;
By day indulged, in larger space they range,
Their bondage certain, but their bounds have change.

[3] Odyssey, b. xi.

[4] ["By those happy souls who dwell
In yellow meads of asphodel."—Pope.]

One was a female, who had grievous ill
Wrought in revenge, and she enjoy'd it still:
With death before her, and her fate in view,
Unsated vengeance in her bosom grew:
Sullen she was and threat'ning; in her eye
Glared the stern triumph that she dared to die:
But first a being in the world must leave—
'T was once reproach; 't was now a short reprieve.

She was a pauper bound, who early gave
Her mind to vice and doubly was a slave:
Upbraided, beaten, held by rough control,
Revenge sustain'd, inspired, and fill'd her soul:
She fired a full-stored barn, confess'd the fact,
And laugh'd at law and justified the act:
Our gentle Vicar tried his powers in vain,
She answer'd not, or answer'd with disdain;
Th' approaching fate she heard without a sigh,
And neither cared to live nor fear'd to die.

Not so he felt, who with her was to pay
The forfeit, life—with dread he view'd the day,
And that short space which yet for him remain'd,
Till with his limbs his faculties were chain'd:
He paced his narrow bounds some ease to find,
But found it not,—no comfort reach'd his mind:
Each sense was palsied; when he tasted food,
He sigh'd and said, "Enough—'t is very good."
Since his dread sentence, nothing seem'd to be
As once it was—he seeing could not see,
Nor hearing, hear aright;[5]—when first I came
Within his view, I fancied there was shame,
I judged resentment; I mistook the air,—
These fainter passions live not with despair;
Or but exist and die:—Hope, fear, and love,
Joy, doubt, and hate, may other spirits move,
But touch not his, who every waking hour
Has one fix'd dread, and always feels its power.

"But will not Mercy?"—No! she cannot plead
For such an outrage;—'t was a cruel deed:
He stopp'd a timid traveller;—to his breast,
With oaths and curses, was the danger press'd:—
No! he must suffer: pity we may find
For one man's pangs, but must not wrong mankind.

Still I behold him, every thought employ'd
On one dire view!—all others are destroy'd;
This makes his features ghastly, gives the tone
Of his few words resemblance to a groan;
He takes his tasteless food, and when 't is done,
Counts up his meals, now lessen'd by that one;
For expectation is on time intent,
Whether he brings us joy or punishment.

Yes! e'en in sleep the impressions all remain,
He hears the sentence and he feels the chain;
He sees the judge and jury, when he shakes,
And loudly cries, "Not guilty," and awakes:
Then chilling tremblings o'er his body creep,
Till worn-out nature is compell'd to sleep.

Now comes the dream again: it shows each scene,
With each small circumstance that comes between—
The call to suffering and the very deed—
There crowds go with him, follow, and precede;
Some heartless shout, some pity, all condemn,
While he in fancied envy looks at them:
He seems the place for that sad act to see,
And dreams the very thirst which then will be:
A priest attends—it seems, the one he knew
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew.

At this his terrors take a sudden flight,
He sees his native village with delight;
The house, the chamber, where he once array'd
His youthful person; where he knelt and pray'd:
Then too the comforts he enjoy'd at home,
The days of joy; the joys themselves are come;—
The hours of innocence;—the timid look
Of his loved maid, when first her hand he took,
And told his hope; her trembling joy appears,
Her forced reserve and his retreating fears.

All now *is* present;—'t is a moment's gleam
Of former sunshine—stay, delightful dream!
Let him within his pleasant garden walk,
Give him her arm, of blessings let them talk.

Yes! all are with him now, and all the while
Life's early prospects and his Fanny's smile:
Then come his sister and his village-friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield;—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind:
He goes through shrubby walks these friends among,
Love in their looks and honour on the tongue:
Nay, there's a charm beyond what nature shows,
The bloom is softer and more sweetly glows;—
Pierced by no crime, and urged by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane,—then linger in the mead,—
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,—
And pluck the blossom where the wild bees hum,
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed;
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their way
O'er its rough bridge—and there behold the bay!—

[5] [The tale of the Condemned Felon arose from the following circumstances:—While Mr. Crabbe was struggling with poverty in London, he had some reason to fear that the brother of a very intimate friend, a wild and desperate character, was in Newgate under condemnation for a robbery. Having obtained permission to see the man, who bore the same name, a glance at once relieved his mind from the dread of beholding his friend's brother; but still he never forgot the being he then saw before him. He was pacing the cell, or small yard, with a quick and hurried step: his eye was as glazed and abstracted as that of a corpse:—

"Since his dread sentence, nothing seem'd to be
As once it was—he seeing could not see,
Nor hearing, hear aright....
Each sense was palsied!"

See *antè*, p. 55.]

The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run—
The ships at distance and the boats at hand;
And now they walk upon the sea-side sand,
Counting the number and what kind they be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea:
Now arm in arm, now parted, they behold
The glitt'ring waters on the shingles roll'd:
The timid girls, half dreading their design,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow,
Or lie like pictures on the sand below:
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon;
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by:
Pearl-shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour-fire,—
Tokens of bliss![6]—"Oh! horrible! a wave
"Roars as it rises—save me, Edward! save!"
She cries:—Alas! the watchman on his way
Calls, and lets in—truth, terror, and the day!

LETTER XXIV.

Tu quoque ne metuas, quamvis schola verbere multo
Increpet et truculenta senex geret ora magister;
Degeneres animos timor arguit; at tibi consta
Intrepidus, nec te clamor plagæque sonantes,
Nec matutinis agitet formido sub horis,
Quòd sceptrum vibrat ferulæ, quòd multa supellex
Virgea, quòd molis scuticam prætexit aluta,
Quòd fervent trepido subsellia vestra tumultu,
Pompa loci, et vani fugiatur scena timoris.
AUSONIUS *in Protreptico ad Nepotem.*

SCHOOLS.[1]

Schools of every Kind to be found in the Borough—The School for Infants—The School Preparatory: the Sagacity of the Mistress in foreseeing Character—Day-Schools of the lower Kind—A Master with Talents adapted to such Pupils: one of superior Qualifications—Boarding-Schools; that for young Ladies; one going first to the Governess, one finally returning Home—School for Youth: Master and Teacher; various Dispositions and Capacities—The Miser-Boy—The Boy-Bully—Sons of Farmers: how amused—What Study will effect, examined—A College Life: one sent from his College to a Benefice; one retained there in Dignity—The Advantages in either Case not considerable—Where, then, the Good of a literary Life?—Answered—Conclusion.

To every class we have a School assign'd,
Rules for all ranks and food for every mind:
Yet one there is, that small regard to rule
Or study pays, and still is deem'd a School:
That, where a deaf, poor, patient widow sits,
And awes some thirty infants as she knits;
Infants of humble, busy wives, who pay
Some trifling price for freedom through the day:
At this good matron's hut the children meet,
Who thus becomes the mother of the street:
Her room is small, they cannot widely stray,—
Her threshold high, they cannot run away:
Though deaf, she sees the rebel-heroes shout,—
Though lame, her white rod nimbly walks about;
With band of yarn she keeps offenders in,
And to her gown the sturdiest rogue can pin:
Aided by these, and spells, and tell-tale birds,
Her power they dread and reverence her words.[2]

To Learning's second seats we now proceed,
Where humming students gilded primers read;
Or books with letters large and pictures gay,
To make their reading but a kind of play—
"Reading made Easy," so the titles tell;
But they who read must first begin to spell:
There may be profit in these arts, but still
Learning is labour, call it what you will;
Upon the youthful mind a heavy load,
Nor must we hope to find the royal road.
Some will their easy steps to science show,
And some to heav'n itself their by-way know;
Ah! trust them not,—who fame or bliss would share,
Must learn by labour, and must live by care.

[6] ["We have here a description of the dream of a felon under sentence of death; and though the requisite accuracy and beauty of the landscape-painting are such as must have recommended it to notice in poetry of any order, it derives an unspeakable charm from the lowly simplicity and humble content of the characters—at least we cannot conceive any walk of *ladies and gentlemen* that could furnish out so sweet a picture as terminates this passage."—JEFFREY.]

[1] Our concluding subject is Education; and some attempt is made to describe its various seminaries, from that of the poor widow who pronounces the alphabet for infants, to seats whence the light of learning is shed abroad on the world. If, in this Letter, I describe the lives of literary men as embittered by much evil; if they be often disappointed, and sometimes unfitted for the world they improve; let it be considered that they are described as men who possess that great pleasure, the exercise of their own talents, and the delight which flows from their own exertions: they have joy in their pursuits, and glory in their acquirements of knowledge. Their victory over difficulties affords the most rational cause of triumph, and the attainment of new ideas leads to incalculable riches, such as gratify the glorious avarice of aspiring and comprehensive minds. Here, then, I place the reward of learning. Our Universities produce men of the first scholastic attainments, who are heirs to large possessions, or descendants from noble families. Now, to those so favoured, talents and acquirements are unquestionably means of arriving at the most elevated and important situations; but these must be the lot of a few: in general, the diligence, acuteness, and perseverance of a youth at the University, have no other reward than some college honours and emoluments, which they desire to exchange, many of them, for very moderate incomes in the obscurity of some distant village: so that, in stating the reward of an ardent and powerful mind to consist principally (I might have said entirely) in its own views, efforts, and excursions, I place it upon a sure foundation, though not one so elevated as the more ambitious aspire to. It is surely some encouragement to a studious man to reflect that, if he be disappointed, he cannot be without gratification; and that, if he gets but a very humble portion of what the world can give, he has a continual fruition of unwearying enjoyment, of which it has not power to deprive him.

[2] "In every village mark'd with little spire,
Embower'd in trees, and hardly known to Fame;
There dwells in lowly shed and mean attire,
A matron old, whom we Schoolmistress name;
Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame.
They grieven sore, in piteous durance pent,
Awed by the power of this relentless dame;
And oft-times, on vagaries idly bent,
For unkempt hair, or task uncomm'd, are sorely shent."
SHENSTONE.

Drawn by R. Westall, R.A. Engraved by Chas. Heath.

THE BOROUGH.

THOUGH DEAF, SHE SEES THE REBEL-HEROES SHOUT—
THOUGH LAME, HER WHITE ROD NIMBLY WALKS ABOUT;
WITH BAND OF YARN SHE KEEPS OFFENDERS IN,
AND TO HER GOWN THE STURDIEST ROGUE CAN PIN.

Letter 21.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, 1860.

Another matron, of superior kind,
For higher schools prepares the rising mind;
Preparatory she her Learning calls,
The step first made to colleges and halls.

She early sees to what the mind will grow,
Nor abler judge of infant-powers I know:[3]
She sees what soon the lively will impede,
And how the steadier will in turn succeed;
Observes the dawn of wisdom, fancy, taste,
And knows what parts will wear, and what will waste:
She marks the mind too lively, and at once
Sees the gay coxcomb and the rattling dunce.

Long has she lived, and much she loves to trace
Her former pupils, now a lordly race;
Whom when she sees rich robes and furs bedeck,
She marks the pride which once she strove to check.
A Burgess comes, and she remembers well
How hard her task to make his worship spell;
Cold, selfish, dull, inanimate, unkind,
'T was but by anger he display'd a mind:
Now civil, smiling, complaisant, and gay,
The world has worn th' unsocial crust away:
That sullen spirit now a softness wears,
And, save by fits, e'en dulness disappears:
But still the matron can the man behold,
Dull, selfish, hard, inanimate, and cold.
A Merchant passes,—"Probity and truth,
"Prudence and patience, mark'd thee from thy youth."
Thus she observes, but oft retains her fears
For him, who now with name unstain'd appears;
Nor hope relinquishes, for one who yet
Is lost in error and involved in debt;
For latent evil in that heart she found,
More open here, but here the core was sound.

Various our Day-Schools: here behold we one
Empty and still:—the morning duties done,
Soil'd, tatter'd, worn, and thrown in various heaps,
Appear their books, and there confusion sleeps;
The workmen all are from the Babel fled,
And lost their tools, till the return they dread:
Meantime the master, with his wig awry,
Prepares his books for business by-and-by:
Now all th' insignia of the monarch laid
Beside him rest, and none stand by afraid;
He, while his troop light-hearted leap and play,
Is all intent on duties of the day;
No more the tyrant stern or judge severe,
He feels the father's and the husband's fear.

Ah! little think the timid trembling crowd,
That one so wise, so powerful, and so proud,
Should feel himself, and dread the humble ills
Of rent-day charges and of coalman's bills;
That while they mercy from their judge implore,
He fears himself—a knocking at the door;
And feels the burthen as his neighbour states
His humble portion to the parish-rates.

They sit th' allotted hours, then eager run,
Rushing to pleasure when the duty's done;
His hour of leisure is of different kind,
Then cares domestic rush upon his mind,
And half the ease and comfort he enjoys,
Is when surrounded by slates, books, and boys.

Poor *Reuben Dixon* has the noisiest school
Of ragged lads, who ever bow'd to rule;
Low in his price—the men who heave our coals,
And clean our causeways, send him boys in shoals;
To see poor Reuben, with his fry beside,—
Their half-check'd rudeness and his half-scorn'd pride,—
Their room, the sty in which th' assembly meet,
In the close lane behind the Northgate-street;
T' observe his vain attempts to keep the peace,
Till tolls the bell, and strife and troubles cease,—
Calls for our praise; his labour praise deserves,
But not our pity; Reuben has no nerves:
'Mid noise and dirt, and stench, and play, and prate,
He calmly cuts the pen or views the slate.

But *Leonard!*—yes, for Leonard's fate I grieve,
Who loathes the station which he dares not leave:
He cannot dig, he will not beg his bread,
All his dependence rests upon his head;
And deeply skill'd in sciences and arts,
On vulgar lads he wastes superior parts.

Alas! what grief that feeling mind sustains,
In guiding hands and stirring torpid brains;
He whose proud mind from pole to pole will move,
And view the wonders of the worlds above;
Who thinks and reasons strongly:—hard his fate,
Confined for ever to the pen and slate:
True, he submits, and when the long dull day
Has slowly pass'd, in weary tasks, away,
To other worlds with cheerful view he looks,
And parts the night between repose and books.

Amid his labours, he has sometimes tried
To turn a little from his cares aside;
Pope, Milton, Dryden, with delight has seized,
His soul engaged and of his trouble eased:
When, with a heavy eye and ill-done sum,
No part conceived, a stupid boy will come;
Then Leonard first subdues the rising frown,
And bids the blockhead lay his blunders down;
O'er which disgusted he will turn his eye,
To his sad duty his sound mind apply,
And, vex'd in spirit, throw his pleasures by.

Turn we to Schools which more than these afford—
The sound instruction and the wholesome board;
And first our School for Ladies:—pity calls
For one soft sigh, when we behold these walls,
Placed near the town, and where, from window high,
The fair, confined, may our free crowds espy,
With many a stranger gazing up and down,
And all the envied tumult of the town;

[3] "Yet, nurs'd with skill, what dazzling fruits appear!
E'en now sagacious Foresight points to show
A little bench of heedless bishops here,
And here a chancellor in embryo,
Or bard sublime, if Bard may e'er be so."
SHENSTONE.

May, in the smiling summer-eve, when they
Are sent to sleep the pleasant hours away,
Behold the poor (whom they conceive the bless'd)
Employ'd for hours, and grieved they cannot rest.

Here the fond girl, whose days are sad and few
Since dear mamma pronounced the last adieu,
Looks to the road, and fondly thinks she hears
The carriage-wheels, and struggles with her tears:
All yet is new,—the misses great and small,
Madam herself, and teachers, odious all;
From laughter, pity, nay command, she turns,
But melts in softness, or with anger burns;
Nauseates her food, and wonders who can sleep
On such mean beds, where she can only weep:
She scorns condolence—but to all she hates
Slowly at length her mind accommodates;
Then looks on bondage with the same concern
As others felt, and finds that she must learn
As others learn'd—the common lot to share,
To search for comfort and submit to care.

There are, 't is said, who on these seats attend,
And to these ductile minds destruction vend;
Wretches—(to virtue, peace, and nature, foes)—
To these soft minds, their wicked trash expose;
Seize on the soul, ere passions take the sway,
And lead the heart, ere yet it feels, astray:
Smugglers obscene!—and can there be who take
Infernal pains the sleeping vice to wake?
Can there be those by whom the thought defiled
Enters the spotless bosom of a child?
By whom the ill is to the heart convey'd,
Who lend the foe, not yet in arms, their aid,
And sap the city-walls before the siege be laid?

Oh! rather skulking in the by-ways steal,
And rob the poorest traveller of his meal;
Burst through the humblest trader's bolted door;
Bear from the widow's hut her winter-store;
With stolen steed, on highways take your stand,
Your lips with curses arm'd, with death your hand;—
Take all but life—the virtuous more would say,
Take life itself, dear as it is, away,
Rather than guilty thus the guileless soul betray.

Years pass away—let us suppose them past,
Th' accomplish'd nymph for freedom looks at last;
All hardships over, which a school contains,
The spirit's bondage and the body's pains;
Where teachers make the heartless, trembling set
Of pupils suffer for their own regret;
Where winter's cold, attack'd by one poor fire,
Chills the fair child, commanded to retire;
She felt it keenly in the morning-air,
Keenly she felt it at the evening prayer.
More pleasant summer; but then walks were made,
Not a sweet ramble, but a slow parade;
They moved by pairs beside the hawthorn-hedge,
Only to set their feelings on an edge;

And now at eve, when all their spirits rise,
Are sent to rest, and all their pleasure dies;
Where yet they all the town alert can see,
And distant plough-boys pacing o'er the lea.

These and the tasks successive masters brought—
The French they conn'd, the curious works they wrought;
The hours they made their taper fingers strike
Note after note, all dull to them alike;
Their drawings, dancings on appointed days,
Playing with globes, and getting parts of plays:
The tender friendships made 'twixt heart and heart,
When the dear friends had nothing to impart:—

All! all! are over;—now th' accomplish'd maid
Longs for the world, of nothing there afraid:
Dreams of delight invade her gentle breast,
And fancied lovers rob the heart of rest;
At the paternal door a carriage stands,
Love knits their hearts and Hymen joins their hands.

Ah!—world unknown! how charming is thy view,
Thy pleasures many, and each pleasure new:
Ah!—world experienced! what of thee is told?
How few thy pleasures, and those few how old!

Within a silent street, and far apart
From noise of business, from a quay or mart,
Stands an old spacious building, and the din
You hear without, explains the work within;
Unlike the whispering of the nymphs, this noise
Loudly proclaims a "Boarding-School for Boys;"
The master heeds it not, for thirty years
Have render'd all familiar to his ears;
He sits in comfort, 'mid the various sound
Of mingled tones for ever flowing round:
Day after day he to his task attends,—
Unvaried toil, and care that never ends:
Boys in their works proceed; while his employ
Admits no change, or changes but the boy;
Yet time has made it easy;—he beside
Has power supreme, and power is sweet to pride
But grant him pleasure; what can teachers feel,
Dependent helpers always at the wheel?
Their power despised, their compensation small,
Their labour dull, their life laborious all;
Set after set the lower lads to make
Fit for the class which their superiors take;
The road of learning for a time to track
In roughest state, and then again go back:
Just the same way, on other troops to wait,—
Attendants fix'd at learning's lower gate.

The Day-tasks now are over—to their ground
Rush the gay crowd with joy-compelling sound;
Glad to elude the burthens of the day,
The eager parties hurry to their play:[4]

[4] "Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,—
We love the play-place of our early days;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
That feels not at that sight—and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill;
The very name we carved subsisting still;
The bench on which we sat while deep employ'd,
Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, yet not destroy'd.
The little ones unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot;
As happy as we once to kneel and draw
The chalky ring and knuckle down at taw.

Then in these hours of liberty we find
The native bias of the opening mind;
They yet possess not skill the mask to place,
And hide the passions glowing in the face;
Yet some are found—the close, the sly, the mean,
Who know already all must not be seen.

Lo! one who walks apart, although so young,
He lays restraint upon his eye and tongue,[5]
Nor will he into scrapes or dangers get,
And half the school are in the stripling's debt:
Suspicious, timid, he is much afraid
Of trick and plot:—he dreads to be betray'd:
He shuns all friendship, for he finds they lend,
When lads begin to call each other friend:
Yet self with self has war; the tempting sight
Of fruit on sale provokes his appetite;—
See! how he walks the sweet seduction by;
That he is tempted, costs him first a sigh,—
'T is dangerous to indulge, 't is grievous to deny!
This he will choose, and whispering asks the price,
The purchase dreadful, but the portion nice:
Within the pocket he explores the pence;
Without, temptation strikes on either sense,
The sight, the smell;—but then he thinks again
Of money gone! while fruit nor taste remain.
Meantime there comes an eager thoughtless boy,
Who gives the price and only feels the joy:
Example dire! the youthful miser stops
And slowly back the treasured coinage drops:
Heroic deed! for should he now comply,
Can he to-morrow's appetite deny?
Beside, these spendthrifts who so freely live,
Cloy'd with their purchase, will a portion give:—
Here ends debate, he buttons up his store,
And feels the comfort that it burns no more.

Unlike to him the Tyrant-boy,[6] whose sway
All hearts acknowledge; him the crowds obey:
At his command they break through every rule;
Whoever governs, he controls the school:
'T is not the distant emperor moves their fear,
But the proud viceroy who is ever near.

Verres could do that mischief in a day,
For which not Rome, in all its power, could pay;
And these boy-tyrants will their slaves distress,
And do the wrongs no master can redress:
The mind they load with fear; it feels disdain
For its own baseness; yet it tries in vain
To shake th' admitted power:—the coward comes again:

> This fond attachment to the well-known place,
> When first we started into life's long race,
> Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
> We feel it e'en in age and at our latest day."
> COWPER.

[5] [In this description Mr. Crabbe condescended to borrow, though probably with some alterations and improvements, the ideas and the language of his second son; whose 'School Eclogues,' written in boyhood, much struck and gratified his father. Mr. John Crabbe has since written many imitations of his father's poetry, some of which, it is hoped, may yet be published.]

[6] [This schoolboy despot was drawn, Mr. Crabbe said, from a tyrant who was his own terror in the school at Stowmarket.]

'T is more than present pain these tyrants give,
Long as we 've life some strong impressions live;
And these young ruffians in the soul will sow
Seeds of all vices that on weakness grow.

Hark! at his word the trembling younglings flee,
Where he is walking none must walk but he;
See! from the winter fire the weak retreat,
His the warm corner, his the favourite seat,
Save when he yields it to some slave to keep
Awhile, then back, at his return, to creep:
At his command his poor dependants fly,
And humbly bribe him as a proud ally;
Flatter'd by all, the notice he bestows,
Is gross abuse, and bantering and blows;
Yet he 's a dunce, and, spite of all his fame
Without the desk, within he feels his shame:
For there the weaker boy, who felt his scorn,
For him corrects the blunders of the morn;
And he is taught, unpleasant truth! to find
The trembling body has the prouder mind.

Hark! to that shout, that burst of empty noise,
From a rude set of bluff, obstreperous boys;
They who, like colts let loose, with vigour bound,
And thoughtless spirit, o'er the beaten ground;
Fearless they leap, and every youngster feels
His Alma active in his hands and heels.

These are the sons of farmers, and they come
With partial fondness for the joys of home;
Their minds are coursing in their fathers' fields,
And e'en the dream a lively pleasure yields;
They, much enduring, sit th' allotted hours,
And o'er a grammar waste their sprightly powers;
They dance; but them can measured steps delight,
Whom horse and hounds to daring deeds excite?
Nor could they bear to wait from meal to meal,
Did they not slily to the chamber steal,
And there the produce of the basket seize,
The mother's gift! still studious of their ease.
Poor Alma, thus oppress'd forbears to rise,
But rests or revels in the arms and thighs.[7]

"But is it sure that study will repay
"The more attentive and forbearing?"—Nay!
The farm, the ship, the humble shop, have each
Gains which severest studies seldom reach.

At College place a youth, who means to raise
His state by merit and his name by praise;

[7] Should any of my readers find themselves at a loss in this place, I beg leave to refer them to a poem of Prior, called 'Alma, or the Progress of the Mind:'—

> "My simple system shall suppose
> That Alma enters at the toes;
> That then she mounts, by just degrees,
> Up to the ankles, legs, and knees;
> Next, as the sap of life does rise,
> She lends her vigour to the thighs;
> And, all these under-regions past,
> She nestles somewhere near the waist;
> Gives pain or pleasure, grief or laughter
> As we shall show at length hereafter.
> Mature, if not improved by time,
> Up to the heart she loves to climb;
> From thence, compell'd by craft and age,
> She makes the head her latest stage."

Still much he hazards; there is serious strife
In the contentions of a scholar's life:
Not all the mind's attention, care, distress,
Nor diligence itself, ensure success:
His jealous heart a rival's powers may dread,
Till its strong feelings have confused his head,
And, after days and months, nay, years of pain,
He finds just lost the object he would gain.

But grant him this and all such life can give,
For other prospects he begins to live;
Begins to feel that man was form'd to look
And long for other objects than a book:
In his mind's eye his house and glebe he sees,
And farms and talks with farmers at his ease;
And time is lost, till fortune sends him forth
To a rude world unconscious of his worth:
There in some petty parish to reside,
The college-boast, then turn'd the village guide:
And though awhile his flock and dairy please,
He soon reverts to former joys and ease,
Glad when a friend shall come to break his rest,
And speak of all the pleasures they possess'd,
Of masters, fellows, tutors, all with whom
They shared those pleasures, never more to come;[8]
Till both conceive the times by bliss endear'd,
Which once so dismal and so dull appear'd.

But fix our Scholar, and suppose him crown'd
With all the glory gain'd on classic ground;
Suppose the world without a sigh resign'd,
And to his college all his care confined;
Give him all honours that such states allow,
The freshman's terror and the tradesman's bow;
Let his apartments with his taste agree,
And all his views be those he loves to see;
Let him each day behold the savoury treat,
For which he pays not, but is paid to eat;
These joys and glories soon delight no more,
Although, withheld, the mind is vex'd and sore;
The honour too is to the place confined,
Abroad they know not each superior mind:
Strangers no *wranglers* in these figures see,
Nor give they worship to a high degree;
Unlike the prophet's is the scholar's case,
His honour all is in his dwelling-place:
And there such honours are familiar things;
What is a monarch in a crowd of kings?
Like other sovereigns he 's by forms address'd,
By statutes govern'd and with rules oppress'd.

When all these forms and duties die away,
And the day passes like the former day,
Then of exterior things at once bereft,
He 's to himself and one attendant left;
Nay, John too goes;[9] nor aught of service more
Remains for him; he gladly quits the door,
And, as he whistles to the college-gate,
He kindly pities his poor master's fate.

Books cannot always please, however good;
Minds are not ever craving for their food;
But sleep will soon the weary soul prepare
For cares to-morrow that were this day's care:
For forms, for feasts, that sundry times have past,
And formal feasts that will for ever last.

"But then from Study will no comforts rise?"—
Yes! such as studious minds alone can prize;
Comforts, yea!—joys ineffable they find,
Who seek the prouder pleasures of the mind:
The soul, collected in those happy hours,
Then makes her efforts, then enjoys her powers;
And in those seasons feels herself repaid,
For labours past and honours long delay'd.

No! 't is not worldly gain, although by chance
The sons of learning may to wealth advance;
Nor station high, though in some favouring hour
The sons of learning may arrive at power;
Nor is it glory, though the public voice
Of honest praise will make the heart rejoice:
But 't is the mind's own feelings give the joy,
Pleasures she gathers in her own employ—
Pleasures that gain or praise cannot bestow,
Yet can dilate and raise them when they flow.

For this the Poet looks the world around,
Where form and life and reasoning man are found;
He loves the mind, in all its modes, to trace,
And all the manners of the changing race;
Silent he walks the road of life along,
And views the aims of its tumultuous throng:
He finds what shapes the Proteus-passions take,
And what strange waste of life and joy they make,
And loves to show them in their varied ways,
With honest blame or with unflattering praise:
'T is good to know, 't is pleasant to impart,
These turns and movements of the human heart:
The stronger features of the soul to paint,
And make distinct the latent and the faint;
MAN AS HE IS, to place in all men's view,
Yet none with rancour, none with scorn pursue:
Nor be it ever of my Portraits told—
"Here the strong lines of malice we behold."

THIS let me hope, that when in public view
I bring my Pictures, men may feel them true:
"This is a likeness," may they all declare,
"And I have seen him, but I know not where:"

[8] [—— "if chance some well-remember'd face,
Some old companion of my early race,
Advanced to claim his friend, with honest joy,
My eyes, my heart, proclaim'd me still a boy;
The glittering scene, the fluttering groups around,
Were quite forgotten when my friend was found:
The smiles of beauty, though those smiles were dear,
Could hardly charm me when that friend was near;
My thoughts bewilder'd in the fond surprise,
The woods of Ida danced before my eyes;
I saw the sprightly wanderers pour along,
I saw and join'd again the joyous throng,
Panting, again I traced the lofty grove,
And Friendship's feelings triumph'd over Love."
BYRON. *Childish Recollections.*

[9] [The sensation of loneliness felt by a fellow of a college when his servant left him for the night, was very feelingly described to Mr. Crabbe by the late Mr. Lambert, one of the senior fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, and made a strong impression on the poet's mind.]

For I should mourn the mischief I had done,
If as the likeness all would fix on one.

Man's Vice and Crime I combat as I can,
But to his GOD and conscience leave the Man;
I search (a Quixote!) all the land about,
To find its Giants and Enchanters out,—
(The Giant-Folly, the Enchanter-Vice,
Whom doubtless I shall vanquish in a trice;)—
But is there man whom I would injure?—No!
I am to him a fellow, not a foe,—
A fellow-sinner, who must rather dread
The bolt, than hurl it at another's head.

No! let the guiltless, if there such be found,
Launch forth the spear, and deal the deadly wound.
How can I so the cause of Virtue aid,
Who am myself attainted and afraid?
Yet as I can, I point the powers of rhyme,
And, sparing criminals, attack the crime.[10]

[10 ["'The Borough' contains a description, in twenty-four letters, of a sea-port. A glance at the contents is sufficient to prove that the author is far from having abjured the system of delineating in verse subjects little grateful to poetry. No themes surely can be more untunable than those to which he has here attempered his lyre. It is observable, too, that they are sought in a class of society yet lower than that which he has hitherto represented. The impurities of a rural hamlet were sufficiently repulsive;—what then must be those of a maritime borough? This gradual sinking in the scale of realities seems to us a direct consequence of that principle of Mr. Crabbe, on which we have hazarded some strictures. 'The Borough' is purely the creature of that principle; the legitimate successor of 'The Village' and 'The Parish Register.' Indeed, if the checks of fancy and taste be removed from poetry, and admission be granted to images, of whatever description, provided they have the passport of reality, it is not easy to tell at what point the line of exclusion should be drawn, or why it should be drawn at all. No image of depravity, so long as it answers to some archetype in nature or art, can be refused the benefit of the general rule. It was the misfortune of Mr. Crabbe's former poems that they were restricted to a narrow range. They treated of a particular class of men and manners, and therefore precluded those representations of general nature which, it scarcely needs the authority of Johnson to convince us, are the only things that 'can please many and please long.' But, with respect to the present poem, this circumstance prevails to a much greater degree. In the inhabitants of a sea-port there are obviously but few generic traces of nature to be detected. The mixed character of their pursuits, and their amphibious sort of life, throw their manners and customs into a striking cast of singularity, and make them almost a separate variety of the human race. Among the existing modifications of society, it may be questioned if there be one which is more distinctly specified, we might say individualised."—GIFFORD. The reader will find Mr. Crabbe's own answer to the foregoing criticism, in the preface to the "Tales," in a subsequent page of this volume.]

OCCASIONAL PIECES.

THE LADIES OF THE LAKE.

[WRITTEN ON VISITING NORMANSTON IN 1785.[1]]

SHALL I, who oft have woo'd the Muse
For gentle Ladies' sake,
So fair a theme as this refuse—
The Ladies of the Lake?

Hail, happy pair! 't is yours to share
Life's elegance and ease;
The bliss of wealth without the care,
The will and power to please,—

To please, but not alone our eyes,
Nor yet alone our mind;
Your taste, your goodness, charm the wise—
Your manners all mankind.

The pleasant scenes that round you glow,
Like caskets fraught with gold,
Though beauteous in themselves, yet owe
Their worth to what they hold.

Trees may be found, and lakes, as fair;
Fresh lawns, and gardens green:
But where again the Sister-pair
Who animate the scene?

Where sense of that superior kind,
Without man's haughty air?
And where, without the trifling mind,
The softness of the fair?

Folly, with wealth, may idly raise
Her hopes to shine like you,
And humble flattery sound her praise,
Till she believes it true;

But wealth no more can give that grace
To souls of meaner kind,
Than summer's fiery sun can chase
Their darkness from the blind.

But drop, you 'll say, the useless pen:
Reluctant—I obey,
Yet let me take it once again,
If not to praise, to pray—

That you, with partial grace, may deign
This poor attempt to take,
And I may oft behold again
The Ladies of the Lake.

INFANCY—A FRAGMENT.[2]

WHO on the new-born light can back return,
And the first efforts of the soul discern—
Waked by some sweet maternal smile, no more
To sleep so long or fondly as before?

[1] ["Normanston, a sweet little villa near Beccles, was one of the early resorts of Mr. Crabbe and Miss Elmy in the days of their anxious affection. Here four or five spinsters of independent fortune had formed a sort of Protestant nunnery, the abbess being Miss Blacknell, who afterwards deserted it to become the wife of the late Admiral Sir Thomas Graves, a lady of distinguished elegance in her tastes and manners. Another of the sisterhood was Miss Waldron, late of Tamworth—dear, good-humoured, hearty, masculine Miss Waldron, who could sing a jovial song like a fox-hunter, and, like him, I had almost said, toss a glass; and yet there was such an air of high *ton*, and such intellect mingled with these manners, that the perfect lady was not veiled for a moment."—*Life of Crabbe, antè*, p. 41. A lady of rank, in Norfolk, has lately written as follows to the Poet's biographer:—"The enjoyment of your Memoir was much increased by my knowledge of several of the parties mentioned in it. Miss Blacknell and Miss Waldron were the acquaintance of my early youth: a visit to Normanston was always a joyful event; and, notwithstanding the masculine deportment of Miss Waldron, her excellent sense and good nature caused her to be preferred, by many judges of character, to her more dignified and graceful companion. I have in my possession a copy of very appropriate verses which Mr. Crabbe addressed to Miss B. and Miss W., in the year 1785."·····]

[2] [Mr. Crabbe's father possessed a small sailing-boat, in which he delighted to navigate the river. The first event which was deeply impressed on the Poet's memory was a voyage in this vessel. A party of amateur sailors was formed—the yacht club of Aldborough—to try the new purchase; a jovial dinner prepared at Orford, and a merry return anticipated at night; and his fond mother obtained permission for George to be one of the company. Soon after sunrise, in a fine summer morning, they were seated in their respective vessels, and started in gallant trim, tacking and manœuvring on the bosom of the flickering water, as it winds gently towards its junction with the sea. The freshness of the early dawn, the anticipation of amusements at an unknown place, and no little exultation in his father's *crack* vessel, "made it," he said, "a morning of exquisite delight." Among his MSS. are the following verses on this early incident.—*Life, antè*, p. 4.]

No! Memory cannot reach, with all her power,
To that new birth, that life-awakening hour.
No! all the traces of her first employ
Are keen perceptions of the senses' joy,
And their distaste—what then could they impart?—
That figs were luscious, and that rods had smart.

But, though the Memory in that dubious way
Recalls the dawn and twilight of her day,
And thus encounters, in the doubtful view,
With imperfection and distortion too;
Can she not tell us, as she looks around,
Of good and evil, which the most abound?

Alas! and what is earthly good? 't is lent
Evil to hide, to soften, to prevent,
By scenes and shows that cheat the wandering eye,
While the more pompous misery passes by;
Shifts and amusements that awhile succeed,
And heads are turn'd, that bosoms may not bleed:
For what is Pleasure, that we toil to gain?
'T is but the slow or rapid flight of Pain.
Set Pleasure by, and there would yet remain,
For every nerve and sense the sting of Pain:
Set Pain aside, and fear no more the sting,
And whence your hopes and pleasures can ye bring?
No! there is not a joy beneath the skies,
That from no grief nor trouble shall arise.

Why does the Lover with such rapture fly
To his dear mistress?—He shall show us why:—
Because her absence is such cause of grief,
That her sweet smile alone can yield relief.
Why, then, that smile is Pleasure:—True, yet still
'T is but the absence of the former ill:
For, married, soon at will he comes and goes;
Then pleasures die, and pains become repose,
And he has none of these, and therefore none of those.

Yes! looking back as early as I can,
I see the griefs that seize their subject Man,
That in the weeping Child their early reign began:
Yes! though Pain softens, and is absent since,
He still controls me like my lawful prince.
Joys I remember, like phosphoric light,
Or squibs and crackers on a gala night.
Joys are like oil; if thrown upon the tide
Of flowing life, they mix not, nor subside:
Griefs are like waters on the river thrown,
They mix entirely, and become its own.
Of all the good that grew of early date,
I can but parts and incidents relate:
A guest arriving, or a borrow'd day
From school, or schoolboy triumph at some play:
And these from Pain may be deduced; for these
Removed some ill, and hence their power to please.

But it was misery stung me in the day
Death of an infant sister made a prey;
For then first met and moved my early fears,
A father's terrors and a mother's tears.
Though greater anguish I have since endured,—
Some heal'd in part, some never to be cured;
Yet was there something in that first-born ill,
So new, so strange, that memory feels it still!

That my first grief: but, oh! in after-years
Were other deaths, that call'd for other tears.
No! that I cannot, that I dare not, paint—
That patient sufferer, that enduring saint,
Holy and lovely—but all words are faint.[3]
But here I dwell not—let me, while I can,
Go to the Child, and lose the suffering Man.

Sweet was the morning's breath, the inland tide,
And our boat gliding, where alone could glide
Small craft—and they oft touch'd on either side.
It was my first-born joy. I heard them say,
"Let the child go; he will enjoy the day."
For children ever feel delighted when
They take their portion, and enjoy with men.
Give him the pastime that the old partake,
And he will quickly top and taw forsake.

The linnet chirp'd upon the furze as well,
To my young sense, as sings the nightingale.
Without was paradise—because within
Was a keen relish, without taint of sin.

A town appear'd,—and where an infant went,
Could they determine, on themselves intent?
I lost my way, and my companions me,
And all, their comforts and tranquillity.
Mid-day it was, and, as the sun declined,
The good, found early, I no more could find:
The men drank much, to whet the appetite;
And, growing heavy, drank to make them light;
Then drank to relish joy, then further to excite.
Their cheerfulness did but a moment last;
Something fell short, or something overpast.
The lads play'd idly with the helm and oar,
And nervous women would be set on shore,
Till "civil dudgeon" grew, and peace would smile no more.

Now on the colder water faintly shone
The sloping light—the cheerful day was gone;
Frown'd every cloud, and from the gather'd frown
The thunder burst, and rain came pattering down.
My torpid senses now my fears obey'd,
When the fierce lightning on the eye-balls play'd.
Now, all the freshness of the morning fled,
My spirits burden'd, and my heart was dead;
The female servants show'd a child their fear,
And men, full wearied, wanted strength to cheer;
And when, at length, the dreaded storm went past,
And there was peace and quietness at last,
'T was not the morning's quiet—it was not
Pleasure revived, but Misery forgot:
It was not Joy that now commenced her reign,
But mere relief from wretchedness and Pain.

[3] [Mr. Crabbe's early religious impressions were strongly influenced by those of his mother, who was a deeply devout woman. Her mildness, humility, patient endurance of afflictions and sufferings, meek habits, and devout spirit, strongly recommended her example to her son.—*Life, and*, pp. 29, 30.]

So many a day, in life's advance, I knew;
So they commenced, and so they ended too.
All Promise they—all Joy as they began!
But Joy grew less, and vanish'd as they ran!
Errors and evils came in many a form,—
The mind's delusion, and the passions' storm.

The promised joy, that like this morning rose,
Broke on my view, then clouded at its close;
E'en Love himself, that promiser of bliss,
Made his best days of pleasure end like this:
He mix'd his bitters in the cup of joy,
Nor gave a bliss uninjured by alloy.

THE MAGNET.

Why force the backward heart on love,
That of itself the flame might feel?
When you the Magnet's power would prove,
Say, would you strike it on the Steel?

From common flints you may by force
Excite some transient sparks of fire;
And so, in natures rude and coarse,
Compulsion may provoke desire.

But when, approaching by degrees,
The Magnet to the Steel draws nigh,
At once they feel, each other seize,
And rest in mutual sympathy.

So must the Lover find his way
To move the heart he hopes to win—
Must not in distant forms delay—
Must not in rude assaults begin.

For such attractive power has Love,
We justly each extreme may fear:
'T is lost when we too distant prove,
And when we rashly press too near.

STORM AND CALM.

[FROM THE ALBUM OF THE DUCHESS OF RUTLAND.]

At sea when threatening tempests rise,
When angry winds the waves deform,
The seaman lifts to Heaven his eyes,
And deprecates the dreaded storm.
"Ye furious powers, no more contend;
"Ye winds and seas, your conflict end;
"And on the mild subsiding deep,
"Let Fear repose and Terror sleep!"

At length the waves are hush'd in peace,
O'er flying clouds the sun prevails;
The weary winds their efforts cease,
And fill no more the flagging sails:
Fix'd to the deep the vessel rides
Obedient to the changing tides;
No helm she feels, no course she keeps,
But on the liquid marble sleeps.

Sick of a Calm the sailor lies,
And views the still, reflecting seas;
Or, whistling to the burning skies,
He hopes to wake the slumbering breeze:
The silent noon, the solemn night,
The same dull round of thoughts excite,
Till, tired of the revolving train,
He wishes for the Storm again.

Thus, when I felt the force of Love,
When all the passion fill'd my breast,—
When, trembling, with the storm I strove,
And pray'd, but vainly pray'd, for rest;
'T was tempest all, a dreadful strife
For ease, for joy, for more than life:
'T was every hour to groan and sigh
In grief, in fear, in jealousy.

I suffer'd much, but found at length
Composure in my wounded heart;
The mind attain'd its former strength,
And bade the lingering hopes depart:
Then Beauty smiled, and I was gay,
I view'd her as the cheerful day;
And if she frown'd, the clouded sky
Had greater terrors for mine eye.

I slept, I waked, and morn and eve,
The noon, the night, appear'd the same;
No thought arose the soul to grieve,
To me no thought of pleasure came;
Doom'd the dull comforts to receive
Of wearied passions still and tame.
"Alas!" I cried, when years had flown—
"Must no awakening joy be known?
"Must never Hope's inspiring breeze
"Sweep off this dull and torpid ease—
"Must never Love's all-cheering ray
"Upon the frozen fancy play—
"Unless they seize the passive soul,
"And with resistless power control?
"Then let me all their force sustain,
"And bring me back the Storm again."

SATIRE.

I love not the satiric Muse:
No man on earth would I abuse;
Nor with empoison'd verses grieve
The most offending son of Eve.
Leave him to law, if he have done
What injures any other son:
It hardens man to see his name
Exposed to public mirth or shame;
And rouses, as it spoils his rest,
The baser passions of his breast.

Attack a book—attack a song—
You will not do essential wrong;
You may their blemishes expose,
And yet not be the writer's foes.
But when the man you thus attack,
And him expose with critic art,
You put a creature to the rack—
You wring, you agonise, his heart.

No farther honest Satire can
In all her enmity proceed,
Than passing by the wicked Man,
To execrate the wicked Deed.

If so much virtue yet remain
That he would feel the sting and pain,
That virtue is a reason why
The Muse her sting should not apply:
If no such Virtue yet survive,
What is your angry Satire worth,
But to arouse the sleeping hive,
And send the raging Passions forth,
In bold, vindictive, angry flight,
To sting wherever they alight?

BELVOIR CASTLE.

[WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE DUCHESS DOWAGER OF RUTLAND, AND INSCRIBED IN HER ALBUM, 1812.]

When native Britons British lands possess'd,
Their glory freedom—and their blessing rest—
A powerful chief this lofty Seat survey'd,
And here his mansion's strong foundation laid:
In his own ground the massy stone he sought,
From his own woods the rugged timbers brought;
Rudeness and greatness in his work combined,—
An humble taste with an aspiring mind.
His herds the vale, his flocks the hills, o'erspread;
Warriors and vassals at his table fed;
Sons, kindred, servants, waited on his will,
And hailed his mansion on the mighty hill.

In a new age a Saxon Lord appear'd,
And on the lofty base his dwelling rear'd:
Then first the grand but threatening form was known,
And to the subject-vale a Castle shown,
Where strength alone appear'd,—the gloomy wall
Enclosed the dark recess, the frowning hall;
In chilling rooms the sullen fagot gleam'd;
On the rude board the common banquet steam'd;
Astonish'd peasants fear'd the dreadful skill
That placed such wonders on their favourite hill:
The soldier praised it as he march'd around,
And the dark building o'er the valley frown'd.

A Norman Baron, in suceeeding times,
Here, while the minstrel sang heroic rhymes,
In feudal pomp appear'd. It was his praise
A loftier dome with happier skill to raise;
His halls, still gloomy, yet with grandeur rose;
Here friends were feasted,—here confined were foes.
In distant chambers, with her female train,
Dwelt the fair partner of his awful reign:
Curb'd by no laws, his vassal-tribe he sway'd,—
The Lord commanded, and the slave obey'd:
No soft'ning arts in those fierce times were found,
But rival Barons spread their terrors round;
Each in the fortress of his power, secure,
Of foes was fearless, and of soldiers sure;
And here the chieftain, for his prowess praised,
Long held the Castle that his might had raised.

Came gentler times:—the Barons ceased to strive
With kingly power, yet felt their pomp survive;
Impell'd by softening arts, by honour charm'd,
Fair ladies studied and brave heroes arm'd.
The Lord of Belvoir then his Castle view'd,
Strong without form, and dignified but rude;
The dark long passage, and the chambers small,
Recess and secret hold, he banish'd all,
Took the rude gloom and terror from the place,
And bade it shine with majesty and grace.

Then arras first o'er rugged walls appear'd,
Bright lamps at eve the vast apartment cheer'd:
In each superior room were polish'd floors,
Tall ponderous beds, and vast cathedral doors:
All was improved within, and then below
Fruits of the hardier climes were taught to grow;
The silver flagon on the table stood,
And to the vassal left the horn and wood.
Dress'd in his liveries, of his honours vain,
Came at the Baron's call a menial train;
Proud of their arms, his strength and their delight;
Loud in the feast, and fearless in the fight.

Then every eye the stately fabric drew
To every part; for all were fair to view:
The powerful chief the far-famed work descried,
And heard the public voice that waked his pride.
Pleased he began—"About, above, below,
"What more can wealth command, or science show?
"Here taste and grandeur join with massy strength;
"Slow comes perfection, but it comes at length.
"Still must I grieve: these halls and towers sublime,
"Like vulgar domes, must feel the force of time;
"And, when decay'd, can future days repair
"What I in these have made so strong and fair?
"My future heirs shall want of power deplore,
"When Time destroys what Time can not restore."

Sad in his glory, serious in his pride,
At once the chief exulted and he sigh'd;
Dreaming he sigh'd, and still in sleep profound,
His thoughts were fix'd within the favourite bound;
When lo! another Castle rose in view,
That in an instant all his pride o'erthrew.
In that he saw what massy strength bestows,
And what from grace and lighter beauty flows,
Yet all harmonious; what was light and free,
Robb'd not the weightier parts of dignity—
Nor what was ponderous hid the work of grace,
But all were just, and all in proper place:
Terrace on terrace rose, and there was seen
Adorn'd with flowery knolls the sloping green,
Bounded by balmy shrubs from climes unknown,
And all the nobler trees that grace our own.

Above, he saw a giant-tower ascend,
That seem'd the neighbouring beauty to defend
Of some light graceful dome,—"And this," he cried,
"Awakes my pleasure, though it wounds my pride."

He saw apartments where appear'd to rise
What seem'd as men, and fix'd on him their eyes—
Pictures that spoke; and there were mirrors tall,
Doubling each wonder by reflecting all.
He saw the genial board, the massy plate,
Grace unaffected, unencumber'd state;
And something reach'd him of the social arts,
That soften manners, and that conquer hearts.

Wrapt in amazement, as he gazed he saw
A form of heav'nly kind, and bow'd in awe:
The spirit view'd him with benignant grace,
And styled himself the Genius of the Place.
"Gaze, and be glad!" he cried, "for this, indeed,
"Is the fair Seat that shall to thine succeed,
"When these famed kingdoms shall as sisters be,
"And one great sovereign rule the powerful three:
"Then you rich Vale, far stretching to the west,
"Beyond thy bound, shall be by *one* possess'd:
"Then shall true grace and dignity accord—
"With splendour, ease—the Castle with its Lord."

The Baron waked,—"It was," he cried, "a view
"Lively as truth, and I will think it true:
"Some gentle spirit to my mind has brought
"Forms of fair works to be hereafter wrought;
"But yet of mine a part will then remain,
"Nor will that Lord its humbler worth disdain;
"Mix'd with his mightier pile shall mine be found,
"By him protected, and with his renown'd;
"He who its full destruction could command,
"A part shall save from the destroying hand,
"And say, 'It long has stood,—still honour'd let it stand.'"

LINES IN LAURA'S ALBUM.

[These lines were written at the desire of a young lady, who requested some verses on a cameo in her possession.]

See with what ease the child-like god
Assumes his reins, and shakes his rod;
How gaily, like a smiling boy,
He seems his triumphs to enjoy,
And looks as innocently mild
As if he were indeed a child!
But in that meekness who shall tell
What vengeance sleeps, what terrors dwell:

By him are tamed the fierce;—the bold
And haughty are by him controll'd;
The hero of th' ensanguined field
Finds there is neither sword nor shield
Availing here. Amid his books
The student thinks how Laura looks;
The miser's self, with heart of lead,
With all the nobler feelings fled,
Has thrown his darling treasures by,
And sigh'd for something worth a sigh.

Love over gentle natures reigns
A gentle master; yet his pains
Are felt by them, are felt by all,
The bitter sweet, the honied gall,
Soft pleasing tears, heart-soothing sighs,
Sweet pain, and joys that agonise.
Against a power like this, what arts,
What virtues, can secure our hearts?
In vain are both—The good, the wise,
Have tender thoughts and wandering eyes:
And then, to banish Virtue's fear,
Like Virtue's self will Love appear;
Bid every anxious feeling cease,
And all be confidence and peace.

He such insidious method takes,
He seems to heal the wound he makes,
Till, master of the human breast,
He shows himself the foe of rest,
Pours in his doubts, his dread, his pains,
And now a very tyrant reigns.

If, then, his power we cannot shun,
And must endure—what can be done?
To whom, thus bound, can we apply?—
To Prudence, as our best ally:
For she, like Pallas, for the fight
Can arm our eye with clearer sight;
Can teach the happy art that gains
A captive who will grace our chains;
And, as we must the dart endure,
To bear the wound we cannot cure.

LINES WRITTEN AT WARWICK.

"You that in warlike stories take delight," &c.

Hail! centre-county of our land, and known
For matchless worth and valour all thine own—
Warwick! renown'd for him who best could write,
Shakspeare the Bard, and him so fierce in fight,
Guy, thy brave Earl, who made whole armies fly,
And giants fall—Who has not heard of Guy?

Him sent his Lady, matchless in her charms,
To gain immortal glory by his arms,
Felice the fair, who, as her bard maintain'd,
The prize of beauty over Venus gain'd;
For she, the goddess, had some trivial blot
That marr'd some beauty, which our nymph had not;
But this apart, for in a fav'rite theme
Poets and lovers are allow'd to dream—
Still we believe the lady and her knight
Were matchless both: He in the glorious fight,
She in the bower by day, and festive hall by night.

Urged by his love, th' adventurous Guy proceeds,
And Europe wonders at his warlike deeds;
Whatever prince his potent arm sustains,
However weak, the certain conquest gains;
On every side the routed legions fly,
Numbers are nothing in the sight of Guy:
To him the injured made their sufferings known,
And he relieved all sorrows, but his own:
Ladies who owed their freedom to his might
Were grieved to find his heart another's right:

The brood of giants, famous in those times,
Fell by his arm, and perish'd for their crimes.
Colbrand the strong, who by the Dane was brought,
When he the crown of good Athelstan sought,
Fell by the prowess of our champion brave,
And his huge body found an English grave.

But what to Guy were men, or great or small,
Or one or many?—he despatch'd them all;
A huge dun Cow, the dread of all around,
A master-spirit in our hero found:
'T was desolation all about her den—
Her sport was murder, and her meals were men.
At Dunmore Heath the monster he assail'd,
And o'er the fiercest of his foes prevail'd.

Nor fear'd he lions more than lions fear
Poor trembling shepherds, or the sheep they shear:
A fiery dragon, whether green or red
The story tells not, by his valour bled;
What more I know not, but by these 't is plain
That Guy of Warwick never fought in vain.

When much of life in martial deeds was spent,
His sovereign lady found her heart relent,
And gave her hand. Then, all was joy around,
And valiant Guy with love and glory crown'd;
Then Warwick Castle wide its gate display'd,
And peace and pleasure this their dwelling made.

Alas! not long—a hero knows not rest;
A new sensation fill'd his anxious breast.
His fancy brought before his eyes a train
Of pensive shades, the ghosts of mortals slain;
His dreams presented what his sword had done;
He saw the blood from wounded soldiers run,
And dying men, with every ghastly wound,
Breathed forth their souls upon the sanguine ground.

Alarm'd at this, he dared no longer stay,
But left his bride, and as a pilgrim gray,
With staff and beads, went forth to weep and fast and pray.
In vain his Felice sigh'd—nay, smiled in vain;
With all he loved he dare not long remain,
But roved he knew not where, nor said "I come again."

The widow'd countess pass'd her years in grief,
But sought in alms and holy deeds relief;
And many a pilgrim ask'd, with many a sigh,
To give her tidings of the wandering Guy.

Perverse and cruel! could it conscience ease,
A wife so lovely and so fond to tease?
Or could he not with her a saint become,
And, like a quiet man, repent at home?

How different those who now this seat possess!
No idle dreams disturb their happiness:
The Lord who now presides o'er Warwick's towers,
To nobler purpose dedicates his powers:
No deeds of horror fill his soul with fear,
Nor conscience drives him from a home so dear:
The lovely Felice of the present day
Dreads not her Lord should from her presence stray;
He feels the charm that binds him to a seat
Where love and honour, joy and duty, meet.

But forty days could Guy his fair afford;
Not forty years would weary Warwick's lord:
He better knows how charms like hers control
All vagrant thoughts, and fill with her the soul,
He better knows that not on mortal strife,
Or deeds of blood, depend the bliss of life;
But on the ties that first the heart enchain,
And every grace that bids the charm remain:
Time will, we know, to beauty work despite,
And youthful bloom will take with him its flight;
But Love shall still subsist, and, undecay'd,
Feel not one change of all that Time has made.

ON A DRAWING OF THE ELM TREE

UNDER WHICH THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON STOOD SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

Is there one heart that beats on English ground,
One grateful spirit in the kingdoms round;
One who had traced the progress of the foe,
And does not hail the field of Waterloo?
Who o'er that field, if but in thought, has gone,
Without a grateful wish for Wellington?

Within that field of glory rose a Tree
(Which a fair hand has given us here to see),
A noble tree, that, pierced by many a ball,
Fell not—decreed in time of peace to fall:
Nor shall it die unsung; for there shall be
In many a noble verse the praise of thee,
With that heroic chief—renown'd and glorious tree!—

Men shall divide thee, and thy smallest part
Shall be to warm and stir the English heart;
Form'd into shapes as fancy may design,
In all, fair fame and honour shall be thine.
The noblest ladies in the land with joy
Shall own thy value in the slightest toy;
Preserved through life, it shall a treasure prove,
And left to friends, a legacy of love.

And thou, fair semblance of that tree sublime,
Shalt a memorial be to distant time;
Shalt wake a grateful sense in every heart,
And noble thoughts to opening minds impart;
Who shall hereafter learn what deeds were done,
What nations freed by Heaven and Wellington.

Heroic tree we surely this may call—
Wounded it fell, and numbers mourn'd its fall;
It fell for many here, but there it stood for all.

ON RECEIVING FROM A LADY A PRESENT OF A RING.

A RING to me Cecilia sends—
And what to show?—that we are friends;
That she with favour reads my lays,
And sends a token of her praise;
Such as the nun, with heart of snow,
Might on her confessor bestow;
Or which some favourite nymph would pay,
Upon her grandsire's natal day,
And to his trembling hand impart
The offering of a feeling heart.

And what shall I return the fair
And flattering nymph?—A verse?—a prayer?
For were a Ring my present too,
I see the smile that must ensue;—
The smile that pleases though it stings,
And says—"No more of giving rings:
Remember, thirty years are gone,
Old friend! since you presented one!

Well! one there is, or one shall be,
To give a ring instead of me;
And with it sacred vows for life
To love the fair—the angel-wife;
In that one act may every grace,
And every blessing have their place—
And give to future hours the bliss,
The charm of life, derived from this;
And when even love no more supplies—
When weary nature sinks to rest;—
May brighter, steadier light arise,
And make the parting moment blest!

TO A LADY, WITH SOME POETICAL EXTRACTS.

SAY, shall thine eye, and with the eye the mind,
Dwell on a work for thee alone design'd?
Traced by my hand, selected by my heart,
Will it not pleasure to a friend impart;
And her dear smile an ample payment prove
For this light labour of aspiring love?

Read, but with partial mind, the themes I choose:
A friend transcribes, and let a friend peruse:
This shall a charm to every verse impart,
And the cold line shall reach the willing heart:
For willing hearts the tamest song approve,
All read with pleasure when they read with love.

There are no passions to the Muse unknown,—
Fear, sorrow, hope, joy, pity, are her own:
She gives to each the strength, the tone, the power,
By varying moods to suit the varying hour;
She plays with each, and veils in changing robes
The grief she pities and the love she probes.

'T is hers for woe the sullen smile to feign,
And Laughter lend to Envy's rankling pain;
Soft Pity's look to Scorn, mild Friendship's to Disdain;
Joy inexpressive with her tear she veils,
And weeps her transport, where expression fails.

TO A LADY ON LEAVING HER AT SIDMOUTH.

YES! I must go—it is a part
That cruel Fortune has assign'd me,—
Must go, and leave, with aching heart,
What most that heart adores, behind me.

Still I shall see thee on the sand
Till o'er the space the water rises,
Still shall in thought behind thee stand,
And watch the look affection prizes.

But ah! what youth attends thy side,
With eyes that speak his soul's devotion—
To thee as constant as the tide
That gives the restless wave its motion?

Still in thy train must he appear,
For ever gazing, smiling, talking?
Ah! would that he were sighing here,
And I were there beside thee walking!

Wilt thou to him that arm resign,
Who is to that dear heart a stranger,
And with those matchless looks of thine
The peace of this poor youth endanger?

Away this fear that fancy makes
When night and death's dull image hide thee;
In sleep, to thee my mind awakes;
Awake, it sleeps to all beside thee.

Who could in absence bear the pain
Of all this fierce and jealous feeling,
But for the hope to meet again,
And see those smiles all sorrow healing?

Then shall we meet, and, heart to heart,
Lament that fate such friends should sever,
And I shall say—"We must not part;"
And thou wilt answer—"Never, never!"

TO SARAH, COUNTESS OF JERSEY, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

Of all the subjects poetry commands,
Praise is the hardest nicely to bestow;
'T is like the streams in Afric's burning sands,
Exhausted now, and now they overflow.
As heaping fuel on a kindling fire,
So deals a thoughtless poet with his praise;
For when he would the cheerful warmth inspire,
He chokes the very thing he hopes to raise.

How shall I, then, the happy medium hit,
And give the just proportion to my song?
How speak of beauty, elegance, and wit,
Yet fear at once t' offend thee and to wrong?
Sure to offend, if far the Muse should soar,
And sure to wrong thee if her strength I spare;
Still, in my doubts, this comfort I explore—
That all confess what I must not declare.

Yet, on this day, in every passing year,
Poets the tribute of their praise may bring;
Nor should thy virtues then be so severe
As to forbid us of thy worth to sing.
Still I forbear: for why should I portray
Those looks that seize—that mind that wins the heart?—
Since all the world, on this propitious day,
Will tell how lovely and how good thou art.

TO A LADY WHO DESIRED SOME VERSES AT PARTING.

Oh! do not ask the Muse to show
Or how we met, or how we part:
The bliss, the pain, too well I know,
That seize in turn this faithful heart.

That meeting—it was tumult all—
The eye was pleased, the soul was glad;
But thus to memory I recall,
And feel the parting doubly sad.

Yes, it was pleasant so to meet
For us, who fear'd to meet no more,
When every passing hour was sweet—
Sweeter, we thought, than all before,
When eye from eye new meanings steal,
When hearts approach, and thoughts unite—
Then is indeed the time to feel,
But, Laura! not a time to write.

And when at length compell'd to part,
When fear is strong, and fancy weak,
When in some distant good the heart
For present ease is forced to seek,—
When hurried spirits fall and rise,
As on the changing views we dwell,
How vainly then the sufferer tries
In studied verse his pains to tell!

Time brings, indeed, his slow relief,
In whom the passions live and die;
He gives the bright'ning smile to grief,
And his the soft consoling sigh:
Till then, we vainly wish the power
To paint the grief or use the pen:
But distant far that quiet hour;
And I must feel and grieve till then.

THE WORLD OF DREAMS.

I.

And is thy soul so wrapt in sleep?
Thy senses, thy affections, fled?
No play of fancy thine, to keep
Oblivion from that grave, thy bed?
Then art thou but the breathing dead
I envy, but I pity too:
The bravest may *my* terrors dread,
The happiest fain *my* joys pursue.

II.

Soon as the real World I lose,
Quick Fancy takes her wonted way,
Or Baxter's sprites my soul abuse—
For how it is I cannot say,
Nor to what powers a passive prey,
I feel such bliss, I fear such pain;
But all is gloom, or all is gay,
Soon as th' ideal World I gain.

III.

Come, then, I woo thee, sacred Sleep!
Vain troubles of the world, farewell!
Spirits of Ill! your distance keep—
And in your own dominions dwell,
Ye, the sad emigrants from hell!
Watch, dear seraphic beings, round,
And these black Enemies repel;
Safe be my soul, my slumbers sound.

IV.

In vain I pray! It is my sin
That thus admits the shadowy throng.
Oh! now they break tumultuous in—
Angels of darkness fierce and strong.
Oh! I am borne of fate along;
My soul, subdued, admits the foe,
Perceives and yet endures the wrong,
Resists, and yet prepares to go.

V.

Where am I now? and what to meet?
Where I have been entrapt before;
The wicked city's vilest street,—
I know what I must now explore.
The dark-brow'd throng more near and more,
With murderous looks are on me thrust,
And lo! they ope the accursed door,
And I must go—I know I must!

VI.

That female fiend!—Why is she there?
Alas! I know her.—Oh, begone!
Why is that tainted bosom bare,
Why fix'd on me that eye of stone?
Why have they left us thus alone?
I saw the deed—why then appear?
Thou art not form'd of blood and bone!
Come not, dread being, come not near!

VII.

So! all is quiet, calm, serene;
I walk a noble mansion round—
From room to room, from scene to scene,
I breathless pass, in gloom profound:
No human shape, no mortal sound—
I feel an awe, I own a dread,
And still proceed!—nor stop nor bound—
And all is silent, all is dead.

VIII.

Now I'm hurried, borne along,
All is business! all alive!
Heavens! how mighty is the throng,
Voices humming live a hive!
Through the swelling crowd I strive,
Bustling forth my way to trace:
Never fated to arrive
At the still-expected place.

IX.

Ah me! how sweet the morning sun
Deigns on yon sleepy town to shine!
How soft those far-off rivers run—
Those trees their leafy heads decline!
Balm-breathing zephyrs, all divine,
Their health-imparting influence give:
Now, all that earth allows is mine—
Now, now I dream not, but I live.

X.

My friend, my brother, lost in youth,
I meet in doubtful, glad surprise,
In conscious love, in fearless truth:
What pleasures in the meeting rise!
Ah! brief enjoyment!—Pleasure dies
E'en in its birth, and turns to pain:
He meets me with hard glazed eyes!
He quits me—spurns me—with disdain.

XI.

I sail the sea, I walk the land;
In all the world am I alone:
Silent I pace the sea-worn sand,
Silent I view the princely throne;
I listen heartless for the tone
Of winds and waters, but in vain;
Creation dies without a groan!
And I without a hope remain!

XII.

Unnumber'd riches I behold,
Glorious untasted I survey:
My heart is sick, my bosom cold,
Friends! neighbours! kindred! where are they?
In the sad, last, long, endless day!
When I can neither pray nor weep,
Doom'd o'er the sleeping world to stray,
And not to die, and not to sleep.

XIII.

Beside the summer sea I stand,
Where the slow billows swelling shine:
How beautiful this pearly sand,
That waves, and winds, and years refine:
Be this delicious quiet mine!
The joy of youth! so sweet before,
When I could thus my frame recline,
And watch th' entangled weeds ashore

XIV.

Yet, I remember not that sea,
That other shore on yonder side:
Between them narrow bound must be,
If equal rise the opposing tide—
Lo! lo! they rise—and I abide
The peril of the meeting flood:
Away, away, my footsteps slide—
I pant upon the clinging mud!

XV.

Oh, let me now possession take
Of this—it cannot be a dream.
Yes! now the soul must be awake—
These pleasures are—they do not seem.
And is it true? Oh, joy extreme!
All whom I loved, and thought them dead,
Far down in Lethe's flowing stream,
And, with them, life's best pleasures fled:

XVI.

Yes, many a tear for them I shed—
Tears that relieve the anxious breast;
And now, by heavenly favour led,
We meet—and One, the fairest, best,
Among them—ever-welcome guest!
Within the room, that seem'd destroy'd—
This room endear'd, and still possess'd,
By this dear party still enjoy'd.

XVII.

Speak to me! speak! that I may know
I am thus happy!—dearest, speak!
Those smiles that haunt fond memory show!
Joy makes us doubtful, wavering, weak;
But yet 't is joy—And all I seek
Is mine! What glorious day is this!
Now let me bear with spirit meek
An hour of pure and perfect bliss.

XVIII.

But do ye look indeed as friends?
Is there no change? Are not ye cold?
Oh! I do dread that Fortune lends
Fictitious good!—that I behold,
To lose, these treasures, which of old
Were all my glory, all my pride:
May not these arms that form infold?
Is all affection asks denied?

XIX.

Say, what is this!—How are we tried,
In this sad world!—I know not these—
All strangers, none to me allied—
Those aspects blood and spirit freeze:
Dear forms, my wandering judgment spare;
And thou, most dear, these fiends disarm,
Resume thy wonted looks and air,
And break this melancholy charm.

XX.

And are they vanish'd? Is she lost?
Shall never day that form restore?
Oh! I am all by fears engross'd;
Sad truth has broken in once more,
And I the brief delight deplore:
How durst they such resemblance take?
Heavens! with what grace the mask they wore!
Oh, from what visions I awake!

XXI.

Once more, once more upon the shore!
Now back the rolling ocean flows:
The rocky bed now far before
On the receding water grows—
The treasures and the wealth it owes
To human misery—all in view;
Fate all on me at once bestows,
From thousands robb'd and murder'd too.

XXII.

But, lo! whatever I can find
Grows mean and worthless as I view;
They promise, but they cheat the mind,
As promises are born to do.
How lovely every form and hue,
Till seiz'd and master'd—Then arise;
For all that admiration drew,
All that our senses can despise!

XXIII.

Within the basis of a tower,
I saw a plant—it graced the spot;
There was within nor wind nor shower,
And this had life that flowers have not.
I drew it forth—Ah, luckless lot!
It was the mandrake: and the sound
Of anguish deeply smother'd shot
Into my breast with pang profound.

XXIV.

"I would I were a soaring bird,"
Said Folly, "and I then would fly:
Some mocking Muse or Fairy heard—
"You can but fall—suppose you try!
And though you may not mount the sky,
You will not grovel in the mire."
Hail, words of comfort! Now can I
Spurn earth, and to the air aspire.

XXV.

And this, before, might I have done
If I had courage—that is all:
'T is easier now to soar than run;
Up! up!—we neither tire nor fall.
Children of dust, be yours to crawl
On the vile earth!—while, happier, I
Must listen to an inward call,
That bids me mount, that makes me fly.

XXVI.

I tumble from the loftiest tower,
Yet evil have I never found;
Supported by some favouring power,
I come in safety to the ground.
I rest upon the sea, the sound
Of many waters in mine ear,
Yet have no dread of being drown'd,
But see my way, and cease to fear.

XXVII.

Awake, there is no living man
Who may my fixed spirit shake;
But, sleeping, there is one who can,
And oft does he the trial make:
Against his might resolves I take,
And him oppose with high disdain;
But quickly all my powers forsake
My mind, and I resume my chain.

XXVIII.

I know not how, but I am brought
Into a large and Gothic hall,
Seated with those I never sought—
Kings, Caliphs, Kaisers,—silent all;
Pale as the dead; enrobed and tall,
Majestic, frozen, solemn, still;
They wake my fears, my wits appal,
And with both scorn and terror fill.

XXIX.

Now are they seated at a board
In that cold grandeur—I am there.
But what can mummied kings afford?
This is their meagre ghostly fare,
And proves what fleshless things they stare!
Yes! I am seated with the dead:
How great, and yet how mean they are!
Yes! I can scorn them while I dread.

XXX.

They 're gone!—and in their room I see
A fairy being, form and dress
Brilliant as light; nor can there be
On earth that heavenly loveliness;
Nor words can that sweet look express,
Or tell what living gems adorn
That wond'rous beauty: who can guess
Where such celestial charms were born?

XXXI.

Yet, as I wonder and admire,
The grace is gone, the glory dead;
And now it is but mean attire
Upon a shrivel'd beldame spread,
Laid loathsome on a pauper's bed,
Where wretchedness and woe are found,
And the faint putrid odour shed
By all that 's foul and base around!

XXXII.

A garden this? oh! lovely breeze!
Oh! flowers that with such freshness bloom!—
Flowers shall I call such forms as these,
Or this delicious air perfume?
Oh! this form better worlds must come,
On earth such beauty who can meet?
No! this is not the native home
Of things so pure, so bright, so sweet!

XXXIII.

Where? where?—am I reduced to this—
Thus sunk in poverty extreme?
Can I not these vile things dismiss?
No! they are things that more than seem:
This room with that cross-parting beam
Holds yonder squalid tribe and me—
But they were ever thus, nor dream
Of being wealthy, favour'd, free!—

XXXIV.

Shall I a coat and badge receive,
And sit among these crippled men,
And not go forth without the leave
Of him—and ask it humbly then—
Who reigns in this infernal den—
Where all beside in woe repine?
Yes, yes, I must: nor tongue nor pen
Can paint such misery as mine!

XXXV.

Wretches! if ye were only poor,
You would my sympathy engage;
Or were ye vicious, and no more,
I might be fill'd with manly rage;
Or had ye patience, wise and sage
We might such worthy sufferers call;
But ye are birds that suit your cage—
Poor, vile, impatient, worthless all!

XXXVI.

How came I hither? Oh, that Hag!
'T is she the enchanting spell prepares;
By cruel witchcraft she can drag
My struggling being in her snares;
Oh, how triumphantly she glares!
But yet would leave me, could I make
Strong effort to subdue my cares.—
'T IS MADE!—and I to freedom wake!

TALES.[1]

TO HER GRACE

ISABELLA, DUCHESS DOWAGER OF RUTLAND.[2]

MADAM,

THE dedication of works of literature to persons of superior worth and eminence appears to have been a measure early adopted, and continued to the present time; so that, whatever objections have been made to the language of dedicators, such addresses must be considered as perfectly consistent with reason and propriety; in fact, superior rank and elevated situation in life naturally and justly claim such respect; and it is the prerogative of greatness to give countenance and favour to all who appear to merit and to need them: it is likewise the prerogative of every kind of superiority and celebrity, of personal merit when peculiar or extraordinary, of dignity, elegance, wealth, and beauty; certainly of superior intellect and intellectual acquirements: every such kind of eminence has its privilege, and being itself an object of distinguished approbation, it gains attention for whomsoever its possessor distinguishes and approves.

Yet the causes and motives for an address of this kind rest not entirely with the merit of the patron; the feelings of the author himself having their weight and consideration in the choice he makes: he may have gratitude for benefits received,[3] or pride not illaudable in aspiring to the favour of those whose notice confers honour; or he may entertain a secret but strong desire of seeing a name in the entrance of his work, which he is accustomed to utter with peculiar satisfaction, and to hear mentioned with veneration and delight.

Such, Madam, are the various kinds of eminence for which an author on these occasions would probably seek, and they meet in your Grace: such too are the feelings by which he would be actuated, and they centre in me: let me therefore entreat your Grace to take this book into your favour and protection, and to receive it as an offering of the utmost respect and duty, from,

May it please your Grace,

YOUR GRACE'S

Most obedient, humble,

and devoted servant,

Muston, July 31, 1812. GEO. CRABBE.

1 [First published in August, 1812. See *antè*, p. 56.]

2 [See *antè*, p. 32.]

3 [On the death of the Duke of Rutland, in 1787, the Duchess, desirous of retaining in the neighbourhood the *protégé* of her lamented husband, gave Mr. Crabbe a letter to the Lord Chancellor, earnestly requesting him to exchange two small livings held by the poet in Dorsetshire, for two of superior value in the vale of Belvoir. Mr. Crabbe proceeded to London, but was not, on this occasion, very courteously received by Lord Thurlow. "No," he growled; "by G—d, I will not do this for any man in England." But he did it, nevertheless, for a woman in England. The good Duchess, on arriving in town, waited on him personally to renew her request, and he yielded. See *antè*, p. 38.]

PREFACE.

THAT the appearance of the present work before the public is occasioned by a favourable reception of the former two, I hesitate not to acknowledge: because, while the confession may be regarded as some proof of gratitude, or at least of attention, from an author to his readers, it ought not to be considered as an indication of vanity. It is unquestionably very pleasant to be assured that our labours are well received; but, nevertheless, this must not be taken for a just and full criterion of their merit: publications of great intrinsic value have been met with so much coolness, that a writer who succeeds in obtaining some degree of notice should look upon himself rather as one favoured than meritorious, as gaining a prize from Fortune, and not a recompense for desert; and, on the contrary, as it is well known that books of very inferior kind have been at once pushed into the strong current of popularity, and are there kept buoyant by the force of the stream, the writer who acquires not this adventitious help may be reckoned rather as unfortunate than undeserving: and from these opposite considerations it follows, that a man may speak of his success without incurring justly the odium of conceit, and may likewise acknowledge a disappointment without an adequate cause for humiliation or self-reproach.

But were it true that something of the complacency of self-approbation would insinuate itself into an author's mind with the idea of success, the sensation would not be that of unalloyed pleasure; it would perhaps assist him to bear, but it would not enable him to escape, the mortification he must encounter from censures, which, though he may be unwilling to admit, yet he finds himself unable to confute; as well as from advice, which, at the same time that he cannot but approve, he is compelled to reject.

Reproof and advice, it is probable, every author will receive, if we except those who merit so much of the former, that the latter is contemptuously denied them; now, of these, reproof, though it may cause more temporary uneasiness, will in many cases create less difficulty, since errors may be corrected when opportunity occurs: but advice, I repeat, may be of such nature, that it will be painful to reject and yet impossible to follow it; and in this predicament I conceive myself to be placed. There has been recommended to me, and from authority which neither inclination nor prudence leads me to resist, in any new work I might undertake, a unity of subject, and that arrangement of my materials which connects the whole and gives additional interest to every part;[1] in fact, if not an Epic Poem, strictly so denominated, yet such composition as would possess a regular succession of events, and a catastrophe to which every incident should be subservient, and which every character, in a greater or less degree, should conspire to accomplish.[2]

In a Poem of this nature, the principal and inferior characters in some degree resemble a general and his army, where no one pursues his peculiar objects and adventures, or pursues them in unison with the movements and grand purposes of the whole body; where there is a community of interests and a subordination of actors: and it was upon this view of the subject, and of the necessity for such distribution of persons and events, that I found myself obliged to relinquish an undertaking, for which the characters I could command, and the adventures I could describe, were altogether unfitted.

But if these characters which seemed to be at my disposal were not such as would coalesce into one body, nor were of a nature to be commanded by one mind, so neither on examination did they appear as an unconnected multitude, accidentally collected, to be suddenly dispersed; but rather beings of whom might be formed groups and

[1] [See Edinburgh Review, vol. xvi. p. 55. "We own we have a very strong desire to see Mr. Crabbe apply his great powers to the construction of some interesting and connected story. He has great talent for narration; and that unrivalled gift in the delineation of character, which is now used only for the creation of detached portraits, might be turned to admirable account in maintaining the interests and enhancing the probability of an extended train of adventures."]

[2] ["We did not," say the Edinburgh Reviewers, "wish Mr. Crabbe to write an Epic—as he seems from his preface to have imagined. We are perfectly satisfied with the length of the pieces he has given us, and delighted with their number and variety. In these respects the volume is exactly as we could have wished it. But we should have liked a little more of the deep and tragical passions—of those passions which exalt and overwhelm the soul—to whose stormy seat the modern muses can so rarely raise their flight—and which he has wielded with such terrific force in his Sir Eustace Grey and the Gipsy Woman. What we wanted, in short, were tales something in the style of those two singular compositions—with less jocularity than prevails in the rest of his writings—rather more incidents, and rather fewer details."]

smaller societies, the relations of whose adventures and pursuits might bear that kind of similitude to an Heroic Poem, which these minor associations of men (as pilgrims on the way to their saint, or parties in search of amusement, travellers excited by curiosity, or adventurers in pursuit of gain) have in points of connection and importance with a regular and disciplined army.

Allowing this comparison, it is manifest that, while much is lost for want of unity of subject and grandeur of design, something is gained by greater variety of incident and more minute display of character, by accuracy of description and diversity of scene: in these narratives we pass from gay to grave, from lively to severe, not only without impropriety, but with manifest advantage. In one continued and connected poem, the reader is, in general, highly gratified or severely disappointed; by many independent narratives, he has the renovation of hope, although he has been dissatisfied, and a prospect of reiterated pleasure, should he find himself entertained.

I mean not, however, to compare these different modes of writing as if I were balancing their advantages and defects before I could give preference to either; with me the way I take is not a matter of choice, but of necessity: I present not my Tales to the reader as if I had chosen the best method of ensuring his approbation, but as using the only means I possessed of engaging his attention.

It may probably be remarked, that Tales, however dissimilar, might have been connected by some associating circumstances to which the whole number might bear equal affinity, and that examples of such union are to be found in Chaucer, in Boccace, and other collectors and inventors of Tales, which, considered in themselves, are altogether independent; and to this idea I gave so much consideration as convinced me that I could not avail myself of the benefit of such artificial mode of affinity. To imitate the English poet, characters must be found adapted to their several relations, and this is a point of great difficulty and hazard: much allowance seems to be required even for Chaucer himself; since it is difficult to conceive that on any occasion the devout and delicate Prioress, the courtly and valiant Knight, and "the poure good Man the persone of a Towne," would be the voluntary companions of the drunken Miller, the licentious Sumpnour, and "the Wanton Wife of Bath," and enter into that colloquial and travelling intimacy which, if a common pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas may be said to excuse, I know nothing beside (and certainly nothing in these times) that would produce such effect. Boccace, it is true, avoids all difficulty of this kind, by not assigning to the ten relators of his hundred Tales any marked or peculiar characters; nor, though there are male and female in company, can the sex of the narrator be distinguished in the narration. To have followed the method of Chaucer might have been of use, but could scarcely be adopted, from its difficulty; and to have taken that of the Italian writer would have been perfectly easy, but could be of no service: the attempt at union, therefore, has been relinquished, and these relations are submitted to the public, connected by no other circumstance than their being the productions of the same author, and devoted to the same purpose, the entertainment of his readers.

It has been already acknowledged, that these compositions have no pretensions to be estimated with the more lofty and heroic kind of poems; but I feel great reluctance in admitting that they have not a fair and legitimate claim to the poetic character: in vulgar estimation, indeed, all that is not prose passes for poetry; but I have not ambition of so humble a kind as to be satisfied with a concession which requires nothing in the poet except his ability for counting syllables; and I trust something more of the poetic character will be allowed to the succeeding pages than what the heroes of the Dunciad might share with the author: nor was I aware that, by describing, as faithfully as I could, men, manners, and things, I was forfeiting a just title to a name which has been freely granted to many, whom to equal, and even to excel, is but very stinted commendation.

In this case it appears that the usual comparison between Poetry and Painting entirely fails: the artist who takes an accurate likeness of individuals, or a faithful representation of scenery, may not rank so high in the public estimation as one who paints an historical event, or an heroic action; but he is nevertheless a painter, and his accuracy is so far from diminishing his reputation, that it procures for him in general both fame and emolument: nor is it perhaps with strict justice determined that the credit and reputation of those verses which strongly and faithfully delineate character and manners, should be lessened in the opinion of the public by the very accuracy which gives value and distinction to the productions of the pencil.

Nevertheless, it must be granted that the pretensions of any composition to be regarded as poetry will depend upon that definition of the poetic character which he who undertakes to determine the question has considered as decisive; and it is confessed also, that one of great authority may be adopted, by which the verses now before the reader, and many others which have probably amused and delighted him, must be excluded: a definition like this will be found in the words which the greatest of poets, not divinely inspired, has given to the most noble and valiant Duke of Athens—

> "The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And as Imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation, and a name."[3]

Hence we observe the Poet is one who, in the excursions of his fancy between heaven and earth,

[3] Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V. Scene 1.

lights upon a kind of fairy-land, in which he places a creation of his own, where he embodies shapes, and gives action and adventure to his ideal offspring: taking captive the imagination of his readers, he elevates them above the grossness of actual being into the soothing and pleasant atmosphere of supramundane existence: there he obtains for his visionary inhabitants the interest that engages a reader's attention without ruffling his feelings, and excites that moderate kind of sympathy which the realities of nature oftentimes fail to produce, either because they are so familiar and insignificant that they excite no determinate emotion, or are so harsh and powerful that the feelings excited are grating and distasteful.

Be it then granted that (as Duke Theseus observes) "such tricks hath strong Imagination," and that such poets "are of imagination all compact;" let it be further conceded, that theirs is a higher and more dignified kind of composition, nay, the only kind that has pretensions to inspiration; still, that these poets should so entirely engross the title as to exclude those who address their productions to the plain sense and sober judgment of their readers, rather than to their fancy and imagination, I must repeat that I am unwilling to admit—because I conceive that, by granting such right of exclusion, a vast deal of what has been hitherto received as genuine poetry would no longer be entitled to that appellation.

All that kind of satire wherein character is skilfully delineated must (this criterion being allowed) no longer be esteemed as genuine poetry; and for the same reason many affecting narratives which are founded on real events, and borrow no aid whatever from the imagination of the writer, must likewise be rejected: a considerable part of the poems, as they have hitherto been denominated, of Chaucer, are of this naked and unveiled character: and there are in his Tales many pages of coarse, accurate, and minute, but very striking description. Many small poems in a subsequent age, of most impressive kind, are adapted and addressed to the common sense of the reader, and prevail by the strong language of truth and nature: they amused our ancestors, and they continue to engage our interest, and excite our feelings, by the same powerful appeals to the heart and affections. In times less remote, Dryden has given us much of this poetry, in which the force of expression and accuracy of description have neither needed nor obtained assistance from the fancy of the writer; the characters in his Absalom and Achitophel are instances of this, and more especially those of Doeg and Og in the second part: these, with all their grossness, and almost offensive accuracy, are found to possess that strength and spirit which has preserved from utter annihilation the dead bodies of Tate, to whom they were inhumanly bound, happily with a fate the reverse of that caused by the cruelty of Mezentius; for there the living perished in the putrefaction of the dead, and here the dead are preserved by the vitality of the living.[4] And to bring forward one other example, it will be found that Pope himself has no small portion of this actuality of relation, this nudity of description, and poetry without an atmosphere; the lines beginning "In the worst inn's worst room," are an example, and many others may be seen in his Satires, Imitations, and above all in his Dunciad: the frequent absence of those "Sports of Fancy," and "Tricks of strong Imagination," have been so much observed, that some have ventured to question whether even this writer were a poet; and though, as Dr. Johnson has remarked, it would be difficult to form a definition of one in which Pope should not be admitted,[5] yet they who doubted his claim had, it is likely, provided for his exclusion by forming that kind of character for their Poet, in which this elegant versifier, for so he must be then named, should not be comprehended.[6]

These things considered, an author will find comfort in his expulsion from the rank and society of Poets, by reflecting that men much his superiors were likewise shut out, and more especially when he finds also that men not much his superiors are entitled to admission.

But, in whatever degree I may venture to differ

[4] ["Dryden, being unwilling to undertake a task upon which he had repeatedly laboured, deputed Nahum Tate to be his assistant in a second part of Absalom and Achitophel; reserving for himself only the execution of certain particular characters, and the general plan and revisal of the poem. The continuation owes all its spirit to the touches and additions of the author of the first part. Those lines to the number of two hundred, beginning—

'Next these a troop of busy spirits press,'

and concluding—

'To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee,'

are entirely composed by Dryden, and contain some of the most masterly strokes of his pen."—Sir Walter Scott.]

[5] [In one of Mr. Crabbe's note-books, containing the original draft of this preface, there is the following passage:—"It has been asked, if Pope was a poet? No one, I conceive, will accuse me of vanity in bringing forward this query, or suppose me capable of comparing myself with a man so eminent; but persons very unlike in other respects may, in one particular, admit of comparison, or rather the same question may be applied to both. Now, who will complain that a definition of poetry, which excludes a great part of the writings of Pope, will shut out him? I do not lightly take up the idea, but I conceive that by that kind of definition, one half of our most agreeable English versification (most generally held, by general readers, to be agreeable and good) will be excluded, and an equal quantity, at least of very moderate, or, to say truly, of very wretched composition, will be taken in."]

[6] ["The great cause of the present deplorable state of English poetry is to be attributed to that absurd and systematic depreciation of Pope, in which, for the last few years, there has been a kind of epidemical concurrence. Men of the most opposite opinions have united upon this topic. Warton and Churchill began it, having borrowed the hint probably from the heroes of the Dunciad, and their own internal conviction that their proper reputation can be as nothing till the most perfect and harmonious of poets—he who, having no fault, has had Reason made his reproach—was reduced to what they conceived to be his level; but even *they* dared not degrade him below Dryden. Goldsmith, and Rogers, and Campbell, his most successful disciples; and Hayley, who, however feeble, has left one poem 'that will not be willingly let die' (the Triumphs of Temper), kept up the reputation of that pure and perfect style; and Crabbe, the first of living poets, has almost equalled the master."—Byron, 1820.]

from any others in my notions of the qualifications and character of the true Poet, I most cordially assent to their opinion who assert, that his principal exertions must be made to engage the attention of his readers; and further, I must allow that the effect of poetry should be to lift the mind from the painful realities of actual existence, from its everyday concerns, and its perpetually-occurring vexations, and to give it repose by substituting objects in their place which it may contemplate with some degree of interest and satisfaction: but, what is there in all this, which may not be effected by a fair representation of existing character? nay, by a faithful delineation of those painful realities, those every-day concerns, and those perpetually-occurring vexations themselves, provided they be not (which is hardly to be supposed) the very concerns and distresses of the reader? for when it is admitted that they have no particular relation to him, but are the troubles and anxieties of other men, they excite and interest his feelings as the imaginary exploits, adventures, and perils of romance;—they soothe his mind, and keep his curiosity pleasantly awake; they appear to have enough of reality to engage his sympathy, but possess not interest sufficient to create painful sensations.[7] Fiction itself, we know, and every work of fancy, must for a time have the effect of realities; nay, the very enchanters, spirits, and monsters of Ariosto and Spenser must be present in the mind of the reader while he is engaged by their operations, or they would be as the objects and incidents of a nursery tale to a rational understanding, altogether despised and neglected: in truth, I can but consider this pleasant effect upon the mind of a reader as depending neither upon the events related (whether they be actual or imaginary), nor upon the characters introduced (whether taken from life or fancy), but upon the manner in which the poem itself is conducted; let that be judiciously managed, and the occurrences actually copied from life will have the same happy effect as the inventions of a creative fancy;—while, on the other hand, the imaginary persons and incidents to which the poet has given "a local habitation and a name," will make upon the concurring feelings of the reader the same impressions with those taken from truth and nature, because they will appear to be derived from that source, and therefore of necessity will have a similar effect.

Having thus far presumed to claim for the ensuing pages the rank and title of poetry, I attempt no more, nor venture to class or compare them with any other kinds of poetical composition; their place will doubtless be found for them.

A principal view and wish of the poet must be to engage the mind of his readers, as, failing in that point, he will scarcely succeed in any other: I therefore willingly confess that much of my time and assiduity has been devoted to this purpose; but, to the ambition of pleasing, no other sacrifices have, I trust, been made, than of my own labour and care. Nothing will be found that militates against the rules of propriety and good manners, nothing that offends against the more important precepts of morality and religion; and with this negative kind of merit, I commit my book to the judgment and taste of the reader—not being willing to provoke his vigilance by professions of accuracy, nor to solicit his indulgence by apologies for mistakes.

[7] [Mr. Crabbe often expressed great admiration of the following lines by Mr. Matthias:—

"The dread resistless pow'r
That works deep-felt at inspiration's hour,
He claims alone—
Who claims?
The favour'd BARD,
Who, nobly conscious of his just reward,
With loftier soul, and undecaying might,
Paints what he feels, in characters of light.
He turns: and, instantaneous, all around,
Cliffs whiten, waters murmur, voices sound;
Portentous forms in heaven's aërial hall
Appear, as at some great supernal call.
"Thence oft in thought his steps ideal haste
To rocks and groves, the wilderness or waste;
To plains, where Tadmor's regal ruins lie
In desolation's sullen majesty;
Or where Carthusian spires the pilgrim draw,
And bow the soul with unresisted awe;
Whence Bruno, from the mountain's pine-clad brow,
Survey'd the world's inglorious toil below;
Then, as down ragged cliffs the torrent roar'd,
Prostrate great Nature's present God adored,
And bade, in solitude's extremest bourn,
Religion hallow the severe sojourn.
"Thence musing, lo, he bends his weary eyes
On LIFE, *and all its sad realities;*
Marks how the prospect darkens in the rear,
Shade blends with shade, and fear succeeds to fear,
'Mid forms that rise, and flutter through the gloom,
Till Death unbar the cold sepulchral room.
"Such is the POET; such his claim divine!—
Imagination's 'charter'd libertine,'
He scorns, in apathy, to float or dream
On listless satisfaction's torpid stream,
But dares, ALONE, in venturous bark to ride
Down turbulent Delight's tempestuous tide;
With thoughts encount'ring thoughts in conflict strong,
The deep Pierian thunder of the song
Rolls o'er his raptured sense; the realms on high
For him disclose their varied majesty;
He feels the call—then bold, beyond control,
Stamps on the immortal page the visions of his soul!"]

TALES.[1]

TALE I.

THE DUMB ORATORS; OR, THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY.

With fair round belly, with good capon lined,
With eyes severe——
Full of wise saws and modern instances.
As You Like It.

Deep shame hath struck me dumb.—*King John.*

He gives the bastinado with his tongue;
Our ears are cudgell'd.—*King John.*

Let's kill all the lawyers;
Now show yourselves men; 't is for liberty:
We will not leave one lord or gentleman.—[2] *Henry VI.*

And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.
Twelfth Night.[2]

THAT all men would be cowards if they dare,
Some men we know have courage to declare;
And this the life of many a hero shows,
That, like the tide, man's courage ebbs and flows:
With friends and gay companions round them, then
Men boldly speak and have the hearts of men;
Who, with opponents seated, miss the aid
Of kind applauding looks, and grow afraid;
Like timid trav'llers in the night, they fear
Th' assault of foes, when not a friend is near.

In contest mighty, and of conquest proud,
Was *Justice Bolt*,[3] impetuous, warm, and loud;
His fame, his prowess all the country knew,
And disputants, with one so fierce, were few:
He was a younger son, for law design'd,
With dauntless look and persevering mind;
While yet a clerk, for disputation famed,
No efforts tired him, and no conflicts tamed.
Scarcely he bade his master's desk adieu,
When both his brothers from the world withdrew.
An ample fortune he from them possess'd,
And was with saving care and prudence bless'd.
Now would he go and to the country give
Example how an English 'squire should live;
How bounteous, yet how frugal man may be,
By a well-order'd hospitality;
He would the rights of all so well maintain,
That none should idle be, and none complain.

All this and more he purposed—and what man
Could do, he did to realise his plan;
But time convinced him that we cannot keep
A breed of reasoners like a flock of sheep;
For they, so far from following as we lead,
Make that a cause why they will not proceed.
Man will not follow where a rule is shown,
But loves to take a method of his own:
Explain the way with all your care and skill,
This will he quit, if but to prove he will.—

[1] ["These Tales may be considered as supplementary chapters to 'The Parish Register,' or 'The Borough.' The same tone, the same subjects, the same finished and minute delineation of things quite ordinary and common; the same kindly sympathy with the humble and innocent pleasures of the Poor, and the same indulgence for their venial offences, contrasted with a strong sense of their frequent depravity, and too constant a recollection of the sufferings it produces; and, finally, the same honours paid to the delicate affections and ennobling passions of humble life, with the same generous testimony to their frequent existence, mixed up as before with a reprobation sufficiently rigid, and a ridicule sufficiently severe, of their excesses and affectations. If we were required to make a comparative estimate of the merits of the present work, or to point out the shades of difference by which it is distinguished from those that have gone before it, we should say, that there are in it a greater number of instances in which the poet has combined the natural language and manners of humble life with the energy of true passion, and the beauty of generous affection—in which he has traced out the course of those rich and lovely veins even in the rude and unpolished masses that lie at the bottom of society—and unfolded, in the middling orders of the people, the workings of those finer feelings, and the stirrings of those loftier emotions, which the partiality of other poets had hitherto attributed almost exclusively to actors on a higher scene. It appears to us, that the volume now before us is more uniformly and directly moral and beneficial in its tendency, than any of those which Mr. Crabbe has hitherto given to the public—consists less of mere curious specimens of description and gratuitous dissections of character, but inculcates, for the most part, some weighty and practical precept, and points right on to the cheerful path by which duty leads us forward to enjoyment."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1812.]

[2] These mottoes are many, because there is a reference in them not only to the characters, but frequently to the incidents also; and they are all taken from Shakspeare, because I could more readily find them in his scenes than in the works of any other poet to whom I could have recourse.

[3] [The original of Justice Bolt was Dr. Franks, of Alderton, on the Norfolk coast—a truly worthy man, but a rather pompous magistrate.]

Yet had our Justice honour—and the crowd,
Awed by his presence, their respect avow'd.

In later years he found his heart incline,
More than in youth, to gen'rous food and wine;
But no indulgence check'd the powerful love
He felt to teach, to argue, and reprove.

Meetings, or public calls, he never miss'd—
To dictate often, always to assist.
Oft he the clergy join'd, and not a cause
Pertain'd to them but he could quote the laws;
He upon tithes and residence display'd
A fund of knowledge for the hearer's aid;
And could on glebe and farming, wool and grain,
A long discourse, without a pause, maintain.

To his experience and his native sense
He join'd a bold imperious eloquence;
The grave, stern look of men inform'd and wise,
A full command of feature, heart, and eyes,
An awe-compelling frown, and fear-inspiring size.
When at the table, not a guest was seen
With appetite so lingering, or so keen;
But when the outer man no more required,
The inner waked, and he was man inspired.
His subjects then were those, a subject true
Presents in fairest form to public view;
Of church and state, of law, with mighty strength
Of words he spoke, in speech of mighty length:
And now, into the vale of years declined,
He hides too little of the monarch-mind:
He kindles anger by untimely jokes,
And opposition by contempt provokes;
Mirth he suppresses by his awful frown,
And humble spirits, by disdain, keeps down;
Blamed by the mild, approved by the severe,
The prudent fly him, and the valiant fear.

For overbearing is his proud discourse,
And overwhelming of his voice the force;
And overpowering is he when he shows
What floats upon a mind that always overflows.

This ready man at every meeting rose,
Something to hint, determine, or propose;
And grew so fond of teaching, that he taught
Those who instruction needed not or sought:
Happy our hero, when he could excite
Some thoughtless talker to the wordy fight:
Let him a subject at his pleasure choose,
Physic or law, religion or the muse;
On all such themes he was prepared to shine,—
Physician, poet, lawyer, and divine.
Hemm'd in by some tough argument, borne down
By press of language and the awful frown,
In vain for mercy shall the culprit plead;
His crime is past, and sentence must proceed:
Ah! suffering man, have patience, bear thy woes—
For lo! the clock—at ten the Justice goes.

This powerful man, on business, or to please
A curious taste, or weary grown of ease,
On a long journey travell'd many a mile
Westward, and halted midway in our isle;
Content to view a city large and fair,
Though none had notice—what a man was there!

Silent two days, he then began to long
Again to try a voice so loud and strong;
To give his favourite topics some new grace,
And gain some glory in such distant place;
To reap some present pleasure, and to sow
Seeds of fair fame, in after-time to grow:
Here will men say, "We heard, at such an hour,
"The best of speakers—wonderful his power."

Inquiry made, he found that day would meet
A learned club, and in the very street:
Knowledge to gain and give, was the design;
To speak, to hearken, to debate, and dine:
This pleased our traveller, for he felt his force
In either way, to eat or to discourse.

Nothing more easy than to gain access
To men like these, with his polite address:
So he succeeded, and first look'd around,
To view his objects and to take his ground;
And therefore silent chose awhile to sit,
Then enter boldly by some lucky hit;
Some observation keen or stroke severe,
To cause some wonder or excite some fear.

Now, dinner past, no longer he suppress
His strong dislike to be a silent guest;
Subjects and words were now at his command—
When disappointment frown'd on all he plann'd;
For, hark!—he heard amazed, on every side,
His church insulted and her priests belied;
The laws reviled, the ruling power abused,
The land derided, and its foes excused:—
He heard and ponder'd—What, to men so vile,
Should be his language?—For his threat'ning style
They were too many;—if his speech were meek,
They would despise such poor attempts to speak:
At other times with every word at will,
He now sat lost, perplex'd, astonish'd, still.

Here were Socinians, Deists, and indeed
All who, as foes to England's church, agreed;
But still with creeds unlike, and some without a creed:
Here, too, fierce friends of liberty he saw,
Who own'd no prince and who obey no law;
There were reformers of each different sort,
Foes to the laws, the priesthood, and the court;
Some on their favourite plans alone intent,
Some purely angry and malevolent:
The rash were proud to blame their country's laws;
The vain, to seem supporters of a cause;
One call'd for change, that he would dread to see;
Another sigh'd for Gallic liberty!
And numbers joining with the forward crew,
For no one reason—but that numbers do.

"How," said the Justice, "can this trouble rise,
"This shame and pain, from creatures I despise?"
And Conscience answer'd—"The prevailing cause
"Is thy delight in listening to applause;
"Here, thou art seated with a tribe, who spurn
"Thy favourite themes, and into laughter turn
"Thy fears and wishes: silent and obscure,
"Thyself, shalt thou the long harangue endure;
"And learn, by feeling, what it is to force
"On thy unwilling friends the long discourse:

" What though thy thoughts be just, and these, it seems,
" Are traitors' projects, idiots' empty schemes;
" Yet minds, like bodies, cramm'd, reject their food,
" Nor will be forced and tortured for their good!"

At length, a sharp, shrewd, sallow man arose,
And begg'd he briefly might his mind disclose;
" It was his duty, in these worst of times,
" T' inform the govern'd of their rulers' crimes:".
This pleasant subject to attend, they each
Prepare to listen, and forbore to teach.

Then voluble and fierce the wordy man
Through a long chain of favourite horrors ran:—
First of the Church, from whose enslaving power,
He was deliver'd, and he bless'd the hour;
" Bishops and deans, and prebendaries all,"
He said, " were cattle fatt'ning in the stall;
" Slothful and pursy, insolent and mean,
" Were every bishop, prebendary, dean,
" And wealthy rector: curates, poorly paid,
" Were only dull;—he would not them upbraid."

From priests he turn'd to canons, creeds, and prayers,
Rubrics and rules, and all our Church affairs;
Churches themselves, desk, pulpit, altar, all
The Justice reverenced—and pronounced their fall.

Then from religion *Hammond* turn'd his view
To give our Rulers the correction due;
Not one wise action had these triflers plann'd;
There was, it seem'd, no wisdom in the land,
Save in this patriot tribe, who meet at times
To show the statesman's errors and his crimes.

Now here was Justice Bolt compell'd to sit,
To hear the deist's scorn, the rebel's wit;
The fact mis-stated, the envenom'd lie,
And, staring spell-bound, made not one reply.

Then were our Laws abused—and with the laws,
All who prepare, defend, or judge a cause:
" We have no lawyer whom a man can trust,"
Proceeded Hammond—" if the laws were just;
" But they are evil; 't is the savage state
" Is only good, and ours sophisticate!
" See! the free creatures in their woods and plains,
" Where without laws each happy monarch reigns,
" King of himself—while we a number dread,
" By slaves commanded and by dunces led:
" Oh, let the name with either state agree—
" Savage our own we 'll name, and civil theirs shall be."

The silent Justice still astonish'd sat,
And wonder'd much whom he was gazing at;
Twice he essay'd to speak—but in a cough,
The faint, indignant, dying speech went off:
" But who is this?" thought he—" a demon vile,
" With wicked meaning and a vulgar style:
" Hammond they call him: they can give the name
" Of man to devils.—Why am I so tame?
" Why crush I not the viper?"—Fear replied,
" Watch him awhile, and let his strength be tried:
" He will be foil'd, if man; but if his aid
" Be from beneath, 't is well to be afraid."

" We are call'd free!" said Hammond—" doleful times,
" When rulers add their insult to their crimes;
" For should our scorn expose each powerful vice,
" It would be libel, and we pay the price."

Thus with licentious words the man went on,
Proving that liberty of speech was gone;
That all were slaves—nor had we better chance
For better times, than as allies to France.

Loud groan'd the Stranger—Why, he must relate,
And own'd, " In sorrow for his country's fate;"
" Nay, she were safe," the ready man replied,
" Might patriots rule her, and could reasoners guide;
" When all to vote, to speak, to teach, are free,
" Whate'er their creeds or their opinions be;
" When books of statutes are consumed in flames,
" And courts and copyholds are empty names:
" Then will be times of joy—but ere they come,
" Havock, and war, and blood must be our doom."

The man here paused—then loudly for Reform
He call'd, and hail'd the prospect of the storm:
The wholesome blast, the fertilising flood—
Peace gain'd by tumult, plenty bought with blood:
Sharp means, he own'd; but when the land's disease
Asks cure complete, no med'cines are like these.

Our Justice now, more led by fear than rage,
Saw it in vain with madness to engage;
With imps of darkness no man seeks to fight,
Knaves to instruct, or set deceivers right:
Then as the daring speech denounced these woes,
Sick at the soul, the grieving Guest arose;
Quick on the board his ready cash he threw,
And from the demons to his closet flew:
There when secured, he pray'd with earnest zeal,
That all they wish'd, these patriot-souls might feel;
" Let them to France, their darling country, haste,
" And all the comforts of a Frenchman taste;
" Let them his safety, freedom, pleasure know,
" Feel all their rulers on the land bestow;
" And be at length dismiss'd by one unerring blow,—
" Not hack'd and hew'd by one afraid to strike,
" But shorn by that which shears all men alike;
" Nor, as in Britain, let them curse delay
" Of law, but borne without a form away—
" Suspected, tried, condemn'd, and carted in a day;
" Oh! let them taste what they so much approve,
" These strong fierce freedoms of the land they love."[4]

[4] The reader will perceive, in these and the preceding verses, allusions to the state of France, as that country was circumstanced some years since, rather than as it appears to be in the present date; several years elapsing between the alarm of the loyal magistrate on the occasion now related, and a subsequent event that further illustrates the remark with which the narrative commences.

Home came our hero, to forget no more
The fear he felt and ever must deplore:
For though he quickly join'd his friends again,
And could with decent force his themes maintain,
Still it occurr'd that, in a luckless time,
He fail'd to fight with heresy and crime:
It was observed his words were not so strong,
His tones so powerful, his harangues so long,
As in old times—for he would often drop
The lofty look, and of a sudden stop;
When conscience whisper'd, that he once was still,
And let the wicked triumph at their will;
And therefore now, when not a foe was near,
He had no right so valiant to appear.

Some years had pass'd, and he perceived his fears
Yield to the spirit of his earlier years—
When at a meeting, with his friends beside,
He saw an object that awaked his pride;
His shame, wrath, vengeance, indignation—all
Man's harsher feelings did that sight recall.

For, lo! beneath him fix'd, our Man of Law
That lawless man the Foe of Order saw;
Once fear'd, now scorn'd; once dreaded, now abhorr'd:
A wordy man, and evil every word:
Again he gazed—"It is," said he "the same;
"Caught and secure: his master owes him shame:"
So thought our hero, who each instant found
His courage rising, from the numbers round.

As when a felon has escaped and fled,
So long, that law conceives the culprit dead;
And back recall'd her myrmidons, intent
On some new game, and with a stronger scent;
Till she beholds him in a place, where none
Could have conceived the culprit would have gone;
There he sits upright in his seat, secure,
As one whose conscience is correct and pure;
This rouses anger for the old offence,
And scorn for all such seeming and pretence:
So on this Hammond look'd our hero bold,
Rememb'ring well that vile offence of old;
And now he saw the rebel dar'd t' intrude
Among the pure, the loyal, and the good;
The crime provok'd his wrath, the folly stirr'd his blood:
Nor wonder was it, if so strange a sight
Caused joy with vengeance, terror with delight;
Terror like this a tiger might create,
A joy like that to see his captive state,
At once to know his force and then decree his fate.

Hammond, much praised by numerous friends, was come
To read his lectures, so admired at home;
Historic lectures, where he loved to mix
His free plain hints on modern politics:
Here, he had heard, that numbers had design,
Their business finish'd, to sit down and dine;
This gave him pleasure, for he judged it right
To show by day that he could speak at night.
Rash the design—for he perceived, too late,
Not one approving friend beside him sate;
The greater number, whom he traced around,
Were men in black, and he conceived they frown'd.
"I will not speak," he thought; "no pearls of mine
"Shall be presented to this herd of swine;"
Not this avail'd him, when he cast his eye
On Justice Bolt; he could not fight, nor fly:
He saw a man to whom he gave the pain,
Which now he felt must be return'd again;
His conscience told him with what keen delight
He, at that time, enjoy'd a stranger's fright;
That stranger now befriended—he alone,
For all his insult, friendless, to atone;
Now he could feel it cruel that a heart
Should be distress'd, and none to take its part;
"Though one by one," said Pride, "I would defy
"Much greater men, yet meeting every eye,
"I do confess a fear—but he will pass me by."

Vain hope! the Justice saw the foe's distress,
With exultation he could not suppress;
He felt the fish was hook'd—and so forbore,
In playful spite to draw it to the shore.
Hammond look'd round again; but none were near,
With friendly smile to still his growing fear;
But all above him seem'd a solemn row
Of priests and deacons, so they seem'd below;
He wonder'd who his right-hand man might be—
Vicar of Holt cum Uppingham was he;
And who the man of that dark frown possess'd—
Rector of Bradley and of Barton-west;
"A pluralist," he growl'd—but check'd the word,
That warfare might not, by his zeal, be stirr'd.

But now began the man above to show
Fierce looks and threat'nings to the man below;
Who had some thoughts his peace by flight to seek—
But how then lecture, if he dar'd not speak!—

Now as the Justice for the war prepared,
He seem'd just then to question if he dared:
"He may resist, although his power be small,
"And growing desperate may defy us all;
"One dog attack, and he prepares for flight—
"Resist another, and he strives to bite;
"Nor can I say, if this rebellious cur
"Will fly for safety, or will scorn to stir."
Alarm'd by this, he lash'd his soul to rage,
Burn'd with strong shame, and hurried to engage.

As a male turkey straggling on the green,
When by fierce harriers, terriers, mongrels seen,
He feels the insult of the noisy train
And skulks aside, though moved by much disdain;
But when that turkey, at his own barn-door,
Sees one poor straying puppy and no more,
(A foolish puppy who had left the pack,
Thoughtless what foe was threat'ning at his back,)
He moves about, as ship prepared to sail,
He hoists his proud rotundity of tail,
The half-seal'd eyes and changeful neck he shows,
Where, in its quick'ning colours, vengeance glows;
From red to blue the pendent wattles turn,
Blue mix'd with red, as matches when they burn;
And thus th' intruding snarler to oppose,
Urged by enkindling wrath, he gobbling goes.

So look'd our hero in his wrath, his cheeks
Flush'd with fresh fires and glow'd in tingling streaks,
His breath by passion's force awhile restrain'd,
Like a stopp'd current greater force regain'd;
So spoke, so look'd he, every eye and ear
Were fix'd to view him, or were turn'd to hear.

"My friends, you know me, you can witness all,
"How, urged by passion, I restrain my gall;
"And every motive to revenge withstand—
"Save when I hear abused my native land.

"Is it not known, agreed, confirm'd, confess'd,
"That, of all people, we are govern'd best?
"We have the force of monarchies; are free,
"As the most proud republicans can be;
"And have those prudent counsels that arise
"In grave and cautious aristocracies;
"And live there those, in such all-glorious state,
"Traitors protected in the land they hate?
"Rebels, still warring with the laws that give
"To them subsistence?—Yes, such wretches live.

"Ours is a Church reform'd, and now no more
"Is aught for man to mend or to restore;
"'T is pure in doctrines, 't is correct in creeds,
"Has nought redundant, and it nothing needs;
"No evil is therein—no wrinkle, spot,
"Stain, blame, or blemish:—I affirm there 's not.

"All this you know—now mark what once befell,
"With grief I bore it, and with shame I tell:
"I was entrapp'd—yes, so it came to pass,
"'Mid heathen rebels, a tumultuous class;
"Each to his country bore a hellish mind,
"Each like his neighbour was of cursed kind;
"The land that nursed them, they blasphemed; the laws,
"Their sovereign's glory, and their country's cause:
"And who their mouth, their master-fiend, and who
"Rebellion's oracle?————You, caitiff, you!"

He spoke, and standing stretch'd his mighty arm
And fix'd the Man of Words, as by a charm.

"How raved that railer! Sure some hellish power
"Restrain'd my tongue in that delirious hour,
"Or I had hurl'd the shame and vengeance due
"On him, the guide of that infuriate crew;
"But to mine eyes, such dreadful looks appear'd,
"Such mingled yell of lying words I heard,
"That I conceived around were demons all,
"And till I fled the house, I fear'd its fall.

"Oh! could our country from our coasts expel
"Such foes! to nourish those who wish her well:
"This her mild laws forbid, but we may still
"From us eject them by our sovereign will;
"This let us do."—He said, and then began
A gentler feeling for the silent man,
E'en in our hero's mighty soul arose
A touch of pity for experienced woes;
But this was transient, and with angry eye
He sternly look'd, and paused for a reply.

'T was then the Man of many Words would speak—
But, in his trial, had them all to seek:
To find a friend he look'd the circle round,
But joy or scorn in every feature found;
He sipp'd his wine, but in those times of dread
Wine only adds confusion to the head;
In doubt he reason'd with himself—"And how
"Harangue at night, if I be silent now?"
From pride and praise received, he sought to draw
Courage to speak, but still remain'd the awe;
One moment rose he with a forced disdain,
And then, abash'd, sunk sadly down again;
While in our hero's glance he seem'd to read,
"Slave and insurgent! what hast thou to plead?"

By desperation urged, he now began:
"I seek no favour—I—the rights of man!
"Claim; and I—nay!—but give me leave—and I
"Insist—a man—that is—and in reply,
"I speak."—Alas! each new attempt was vain:
Confused he stood, he sate, he rose again;
At length he growl'd defiance, sought the door,
Cursed the whole synod, and was seen no more.

"Laud we," said Justice Bolt, "the Powers above:
"Thus could our speech the sturdiest foe remove."
Exulting now he gain'd new strength of fame,
And lost all feelings of defeat and shame.

"He dared not strive, you witness'd—dared not lift
"His voice, nor drive at his accursed drift:
"So all shall tremble, wretches who oppose
"Our Church or State—thus be it to our foes."

He spoke, and, seated with his former air,
Look'd his full self, and fill'd his ample chair;
Took one full bumper to each favourite cause,
And dwelt all night on politics and laws,
With high applauding voice, that gain'd him high applause.[5]

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[5] [This tale is not judiciously placed at the portal to tempt hesitating readers to go forward. The fault, however, is entirely in the subject, which commands no strong or general interest; for it is perfectly well conceived and executed. The object of it is to show, that a man's fluency and force and intrepidity of speech depend very much upon his confidence of the approbation of his auditors; and, accordingly it exhibits the orthodox, loyal, authorative Justice Bolt struck quite dumb in an assembly of Jacobins into which he happens to stray; and the Jacobin orator, in like manner reduced to stammering and imbecility, when detected at a dinner of parsons. The description of Justice Bolt is admirable, and may stand for a portrait of more than one provincial dictator. —JEFFREY.]

Drawn by R.Westall R.A. Engraved by Chas.Heath.

TALES.

BENEATH YON TREE, OBSERVE AN ANCIENT PAIR—
A SLEEPING MAN; A WOMAN IN HER CHAIR;
WATCHING HIS LOOKS WITH KIND AND PENSIVE AIR.

Tale II.

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TALE II.

THE PARTING HOUR.[1]

. . . . I did not take my leave of him, but had
Most pretty things to say: ere I could tell him
How I would think of him, at certain hours
Such thoughts and such;—or ere I could
Give him that parting kiss, which I had set
Betwixt two charming words—comes in my father.
Cymbeline.

Grief hath changed me since you saw me last,
And careful hours with Time's deformed hand
Have written strange defeatures o'er my face.
Comedy of Errors.

Oh! if thou be the same Egean, speak,
And speak unto the same Emilia.—*Comedy of Errors.*

I ran it through, ev'n from my boyish days
To the very moment that she bade me tell it,
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery. *Othello.*

An old man, broken with the storms of fate,
Is come to lay his weary bones among you;
Give him a little earth for charity. *Henry VIII.*

Minutely trace man's life; year after year,
Through all his days let all his deeds appear,
And then, though some may in that life be strange,
Yet there appears no vast nor sudden change:
The links that bind those various deeds are seen,
And no mysterious void is left between.

But let these binding links be all destroy'd,
All that through years he suffer'd or enjoy'd:
Let that vast gap be made, and then behold—
This was the youth, and he is thus when old;
Then we at once the work of time survey,
And in an instant see a life's decay;
Pain mix'd with pity in our bosoms rise,
And sorrow takes new sadness from surprise.

Beneath yon tree, observe an ancient pair—
A sleeping man; a woman in her chair,
Watching his looks with kind and pensive air;
Nor wife, nor sister she, nor is the name
Nor kindred of this friendly pair the same;
Yet so allied are they, that few can feel
Her constant, warm, unwearied, anxious zeal;
Their years and woes, although they long have loved,
Keep their good name and conduct unreproved:
Thus life's small comforts they together share,
And while life lingers for the grave prepare.

No other subjects on their spirits press,
Nor gain such int'rest as the past distress:
Grievous events, that from the mem'ry drive
Life's common cares, and those alone survive,
Mix with each thought, in every action share,
Darken each dream, and blend with every prayer.

To *David Booth*, his fourth and last-born boy,
Allen his name, was more than common joy;
And as the child grew up, there seem'd in him
A more than common life in every limb;
A strong and handsome stripling he became,
And the gay spirit answer'd to the frame;
A lighter, happier lad was never seen,
For ever easy, cheerful, or serene;
His early love he fix'd upon a fair
And gentle maid—they were a handsome pair.

They at an infant-school together play'd,
Where the foundation of their love was laid:
The boyish champion would his choice attend
In every sport, in every fray defend.
As prospects open'd, and as life advanced,
They walk'd together, they together danced;
On all occasions, from their early years,
They mix'd their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears;
Each heart was anxious, till it could impart
Its daily feelings to its kindred heart;
As years increased, unnumber'd petty wars
Broke out between them; jealousies and jars;
Causeless indeed, and follow'd by a peace,
That gave to love—growth, vigour, and increase.
Whilst yet a boy, when other minds are void,
Domestic thoughts young Allen's hours employ'd.
Judith in gaining hearts had no concern,
Rather intent the matron's part to learn;
Thus early prudent and sedate they grew,
While lovers, thoughtful—and though children, true.
To either parents not a day appear'd,
When with this love they might have interfered.
Childish at first, they cared not to restrain;
And strong at last, they saw restriction vain;
Nor knew they when that passion to reprove,
Now idle fondness, now resistless love.

So while the waters rise, the children tread
On the broad estuary's sandy bed;
But soon the channel fills, from side to side
Comes danger rolling with the deep'ning tide;
Yet none who saw the rapid current flow
Could the first instant of that danger know.

The lovers waited till the time should come
When they together could possess a home:
In either house were men and maids unwed,
Hopes to be soothed, and tempers to be led.

[1] [Mr. Crabbe's fourth brother, William, taking to a seafaring life, was made prisoner by the Spaniards: he was carried to Mexico, where he became a silversmith, married, and prospered, until his increasing riches attracted a charge of Protestantism; the consequence of which was much persecution. He at last was obliged to abandon Mexico, his property, and his family; and was discovered, in the year 1803, by an Aldborough sailor, on the coast of Honduras, where again he seems to have found some success in business. This sailor was the only person he had seen for many a year who could tell him any thing of Aldborough and his family; and great was his perplexity when he was informed that his eldest brother, George, was a clergyman. "This cannot be *our* George," said the wanderer—"he was a *doctor!*" This was the first, and it was also the last, tidings that ever reached Mr. Crabbe of his brother William; and, upon the Aldborough sailor's story of his casual interview, it is obvious that he built this tale.—See *anté*, p. 2.]

Then Allen's mother of his favourite maid
Spoke from the feelings of a mind afraid:
"Dress and amusements were her sole employ,"
She said—"entangling her deluded boy;"
And yet, in truth, a mother's jealous love
Had much imagined and could little prove;
Judith had beauty—and if vain, was kind,
Discreet and mild, and had a serious mind.

Dull was their prospect.—When the lovers met,
They said, "We must not—dare not venture yet."
"Oh! could I labour for thee," Allen cried,
"Why should our friends be thus dissatisfied;
"On my own arm I could depend, but they
"Still urge obedience—must I yet obey?"
Poor Judith felt the grief, but grieving begg'd delay.

At length a prospect came that seem'd to smile,
And faintly woo them, from a Western Isle;
A kinsman there a widow's hand had gain'd,
"Was old, was rich, and childless yet remain'd;
"Would some young Booth to his affairs attend,
"And wait awhile, he might expect a friend."
The elder brothers, who were not in love,
Fear'd the false seas, unwilling to remove;
But the young Allen, an enamour'd boy,
Eager an independence to enjoy,
Would through all perils seek it,—by the sea,—
Through labour, danger, pain, or slavery.
The faithful Judith his design approved,
For both were sanguine, they were young, and loved.
The mother's slow consent was then obtain'd;
The time arrived, to part alone remain'd:
All things prepared, on the expected day
Was seen the vessel anchor'd in the bay.
From her would seamen in the evening come,
To take th' adventurous Allen from his home;
With his own friends the final day he pass'd,
And every painful hour, except the last.
The grieving father urged the cheerful glass,
To make the moments with less sorrow pass;
Intent the mother look'd upon her son,
And wish'd th' assent withdrawn, the deed undone;
The younger sister, as he took his way,
Hung on his coat, and begg'd for more delay:
But his own Judith call'd him to the shore,
Whom he must meet, for they might meet no more;—
And there he found her—faithful, mournful, true,
Weeping, and waiting for a last adieu!
The ebbing tide had left the sand, and there
Moved with slow steps the melancholy pair:
Sweet were the painful moments—but, how sweet,
And without pain, when they again should meet!
Now either spoke as hope and fear impress'd
Each their alternate triumph in the breast.

Distance alarm'd the maid—she cried, "'T is far!"
And danger too—"it is a time of war:
"Then in those countries are diseases strange,
"And women gay, and men are prone to change:
"What then may happen in a year, when things
"Of vast importance every moment brings!
"But hark! an oar!" she cried, yet none appear'd—
'T was love's mistake, who fancied what it fear'd;
And she continued—"Do, my Allen, keep
"Thy heart from evil, let thy passions sleep;
"Believe it good, nay glorious, to prevail,
"And stand in safety where so many fail;
"And do not, Allen, or for shame, or pride,
"Thy faith abjure, or thy profession hide,
"Can I believe *his* love will lasting prove,
"Who has no rev'rence for the God I love?
"I know thee well! how good thou art and kind;
"But strong the passions that invade thy mind—
"Now, what to me hath Allen to commend?"—
"Upon my mother," said the youth, "attend;
"Forget her spleen, and, in my place appear,
"Her love to me will make my Judith dear,
"Oft I shall think (such comforts lovers seek),
"Who speaks of me, and fancy what they speak;
"Then write on all occasions, always dwell
"On hope's fair prospects, and be kind and well,
"And ever choose the fondest, tenderest style."
She answer'd, "No," but answer'd with a smile.
"And now, my Judith, at so sad a time,
"Forgive my fear, and call it not my crime;
"When with our youthful neighbours 't is thy chance
"To meet in walks, the visit, or the dance,
"When every lad would on my lass attend,
"Choose not a smooth designer for a friend;
"That fawning Philip!—nay, be not severe,
"A rival's hope must cause a lover's fear."

Displeased she felt, and might in her reply
Have mix'd some anger, but the boat was nigh,
Now truly heard!—it soon was full in sight;—
Now the sad farewell, and the long good-night;
For see!—his friends come hast'ning to the beach,
And now the gunwale is within the reach:
"Adieu!—farewell!—remember!"—and what more
Affection taught, was utter'd from the shore.
But Judith left them with a heavy heart,
Took a last view, and went to weep apart.
And now his friends went slowly from the place,
Where she stood still, the dashing oar to trace,
Till all were silent!—for the youth she pray'd,
And softly then return'd the weeping maid.

They parted, thus by hope and fortune led,
And Judith's hours in pensive pleasure fled;
But when return'd the youth?—the youth no more
Return'd exulting to his native shore;
But forty years were past, and then there came
A worn-out man with wither'd limbs and lame,
His mind oppress'd with woes, and bent with age his frame:
Yes! old and grieved, and trembling with decay,
Was Allen landing in his native bay,
Willing his breathless form should blend with kindred clay.
In an autumnal eve he left the beach,
In such an eve he chanced the port to reach:

He was alone; he press'd the very place
Of the sad parting, of the last embrace.[2]
There stood his parents, there retired the maid,
So fond, so tender, and so much afraid;
And on that spot, through many year, his mind
Turn'd mournful back, half sinking, half resign'd.

No one was present; of its crew bereft,
A single boat was in the billows left;
Sent from some anchor'd vessel in the bay,
At the returning tide to sail away.
O'er the black stern the moonlight softly play'd,
The loosen'd foresail flapping in the shade;
All silent else on shore; but from the town
A drowsy peal of distant bells came down:
From the tall houses here and there, a light
Served some confused remembrance to excite:
"There," he observed, and new emotions felt,
"Was my first home—and yonder Judith dwelt;
"Dead! dead are all! I long—I fear to know,"
He said, and walk'd impatient, and yet slow.

Sudden there broke upon his grief a noise
Of merry tumult and of vulgar joys:
Seamen returning to their ship, were come,
With idle numbers straying from their home;
Allen among them mix'd, and in the old
Strove some familiar features to behold;
While fancy aided memory:—"Man! what cheer?"
A sailor cried; "Art thou at anchor here?"
Faintly he answer'd, and then tried to trace
Some youthful features in some aged face:
A swarthy matron he beheld, and thought
She might unfold the very truths he sought:
Confused and trembling, he the dame address'd:
"The *Booths!* yet live they?" pausing and oppress'd;
Then spake again:—"Is there no ancient man,
"David his name?—assist me, if you can.—
"Flemmings there were—and Judith, doth she live?"
The woman gazed, nor could an answer give;
Yet wond'ring stood, and all were silent by,
Feeling a strange and solemn sympathy.
The woman musing said—"She knew full well
"Where the old people came at last to dwell;
"They had a married daughter, and a son,
"But they were dead, and now remain'd not one."

"Yes," said an elder, who had paused intent
On days long past, "there was a sad event;—
"One of these Booths—it was my mother's tale—
"Here left his lass, I know not where to sail:
"She saw their parting, and observed the pain;
"But never came th' unhappy man again:"
"The ship was captured"—Allen meekly said,
"And what became of the forsaken maid?"
The woman answer'd: "I remember now,
"She used to tell the lasses of her vow,
"And of her lover's loss, and I have seen
"The gayest hearts grow sad where she has been;
"Yet in her grief she married, and was made
"Slave to a wretch, whom meekly she obey'd,
"And early buried—but I know no more:
"And hark! our friends are hast'ning to the shore."

Allen soon found a lodging in the town,
And walk'd, a man unnoticed up and down,
This house, and this, he knew, and thought a face
He sometimes could among a number trace:
Of names remember'd there remain'd a few,
But of no favourites, and the rest were new:[3]
A merchant's wealth, when Allen went to sea,
Was reckon'd boundless.—Could he living be?
Or lived his son? for one he had, the heir,
To a vast business, and a fortune fair.
No! but that heir's poor widow, from her shed,
With crutches went to take her dole of bread:
There was a friend whom he had left a boy,
With hope to sail the master of a hoy;
Him, after many a stormy day, he found
With his great wish, his life's whole purpose, crown'd.
This hoy's proud captain look'd in Allen's face,—
"Yours is, my friend," said he, "a woeful case;
"We cannot all succeed: I now command
"The Betsy sloop, and am not much at land:
"But when we meet, you shall your story tell
"Of foreign parts—I bid you now farewell!"

Allen so long had left his native shore,[4]
He saw but few whom he had seen before;
The older people, as they met him, cast
A pitying look, oft speaking as they pass'd—
"The man is Allen Booth, and it appears
"He dwelt among us in his early years:

[2] [Original MS.:—

In a clear eve the lover sail'd, and one
As clear and bright on aged Allen shone:
On the spot sanction'd by the last embrace
The old man stood! and sigh'd upon the place.]

[3] ["Last summer I went down to my native town, where I found the streets much narrower and shorter than I thought I had left them, inhabited by a new race of people, to whom I was very little known. My play-fellows were grown old, and forced me to suspect I was no longer young. My only remaining friend had changed his principles, and was become the tool of the predominant faction. I wandered about for five days, and took the first convenient opportunity of returning to a place where, if there is not much happiness, there is, at least, such a diversity of good and evil, that slight vexations do not fix upon the heart."—Dr. Johnson.]

[4] [Original MS.:—

Oft to his children had the father told
Where he resided in the years of old;
When, without thought, his feeling and his pride
The native town adorn'd and magnified;
The streets, the markets, and the quays were all
Spacious and grand, and every building tall:
The tower and church were sea-marks leagues from land—
Men were amazed to see them look so grand!
His father's house was then in Allen's eyes,
But far increased in beauty and in size;
And their small area where the schoolboys play'd,
Room for an army had his fancy made:
But now the dark and feeble mind debased,
Contracted, sullied all that fancy graced,
All spaces dwindled—streets but alleys seem'd:
Then dreamt he now, or absent had he dream'd?
The church itself, the lofty tower, the scene
Of so much glory, was debased and mean:
The mind each object in dull clothing dress'd,
And its own sadness on each scene impress'd.]

" We see the name engraved upon the stones,
" Where this poor wanderer means to lay his bones."
Thus where he lived and loved—unhappy change!—
He seems a stranger, and finds all are strange.

But now a Widow, in a village near,
Chanced of the melancholy man to hear;
Old as she was, to Judith's bosom came
Some strong emotions at the well-known name;
He was her much-loved Allen, she had stay'd
Ten troubled years, a sad afflicted maid;
Then was she wedded, of his death assured,
And much of mis'ry in her lot endured;
Her husband died; her children sought their bread
In various places, and to her were dead.
The once fond lovers met; not grief nor age,
Sickness nor pain, their hearts could disengage:
Each had immediate confidence; a friend
Both now beheld, on whom they might depend:
" Now is there one to whom I can express
" My nature's weakness, and my soul's distress."
Allen look'd up, and with impatient heart—
" Let me not lose thee—never let us part:
" So Heaven this comfort to my sufferings give,
" It is not all distress to think and live."
Thus Allen spoke—for time had not removed
The charms attach'd to one so fondly loved;
Who with more health, the mistress of their cot,
Labours to soothe the evils of his lot.
To her, to her alone, his various fate,
At various times, 't is comfort to relate;
And yet his sorrow—she too loves to hear
What wrings her bosom, and compels the tear.

First he related how he left the shore,
Alarm'd with fears that they should meet no more.
Then, ere the ship had reach'd her purposed course,
They met and yielded to the Spanish force;
Then 'cross th' Atlantic seas they bore their prey,
Who grieving landed from their sultry bay:
And marching many a burning league, he found
Himself a slave upon a miner's ground:
There a good priest his native language spoke,
And gave some ease to his tormenting yoke;
Kindly advanced him in his master's grace,
And he was station'd in an easier place:
There, hopeless ever to escape the land,
He to a Spanish maiden gave his hand;
In cottage shelter'd from the blaze of day,
He saw his happy infants round him play;
Where summer shadows, made by lofty trees,
Waved o'er his seat, and soothed his reveries;
E'en then he thought of England, nor could sigh,
But his fond Isabel demanded, " Why?"
Grieved by the story, she the sigh repaid,
And wept in pity for the English maid:
Thus twenty years were pass'd, and pass'd his views
Of further bliss, for he had wealth to lose:
His friend now dead, some foe had dared to paint
" His faith as tainted: he his spouse would taint;
" Make all his children infidels, and found
" An English heresy on Christian ground."

" Whilst I was poor," said Allen, " none would care
" What my poor notions of religion were;
" None ask'd me whom I worshipp'd, how I pray'd,
" If due obedience to the laws were paid:
" My good adviser taught me to be still,
" Nor to make converts had I power or will.
" I preach'd no foreign doctrine to my wife,
" And never mention'd Luther in my life;
" I, all they said, say what they would, allow'd,
" And when the fathers bade me bow, I bow'd;
" Their forms I follow'd, whether well or sick,
" And was a most obedient Catholic.
" But I had money, and these pastors found
" My notions vague, heretical, unsound:
" A wicked book they seized; the very Turk
" Could not have read a more pernicious work;
" To me pernicious, who if it were good
" Or evil question'd not, nor understood:
" Oh! had I little but the book possess'd,
" I might have read it, and enjoy'd my rest."

Alas! poor Allen—through his wealth was seen
Crimes that by poverty conceal'd had been:
Faults that in dusty pictures rest unknown,
Are in an instant through the varnish shown.

He told their cruel mercy; how at last,
In Christian kindness for the merits past,
They spared his forfeit life, but bade him fly,
Or for his crime and contumacy die;
Fly from all scenes, all objects of delight:
His wife, his children, weeping in his sight,
All urging him to flee, he fled, and cursed his flight.

He next related how he found a way,
Guideless and grieving, to Campeachy-Bay:
There in the woods he wrought, and there, among
Some lab'ring seamen, heard his native tongue:
The sound, one moment, broke upon his pain
With joyful force; he long'd to hear again:
Again he heard; he seized an offer'd hand,
" And when beheld you last our native land!"
He cried, " and in what country? quickly say."
The seamen answer'd—strangers all were they;
Only one at his native port had been;
He, landing once, the quay and church had seen,
For that esteem'd; but nothing more he knew.
Still more to know, would Allen join the crew,
Sail where they sail'd, and, many a peril past,
They at his kinsman's isle their anchor cast;
But him they found not, nor could one relate
Aught of his will, his wish, or his estate.
This grieved not Allen; then again he sail'd
For England's coast, again his fate prevail'd:
War raged, and he, an active man and strong,
Was soon impress'd, and served his country long.
By various shores he pass'd, on various seas,
Never so happy as when void of ease.—
And then he told how in a calm distress'd,
Day after day his soul was sick of rest;
When, as a log upon the deep they stood,
Then roved his spirit to the inland wood;
Till, while awake, he dream'd, that on the seas
Were his loved home, the hill, the stream, the trees:
He gazed, he pointed to the scenes:—" There stand
" My wife, my children: 't is my lovely land.

"See! there my dwelling—oh! delicious scene
"Of my best life:—unhand me—are ye men?"
And thus the frenzy ruled him, till the wind
Brush'd the fond pictures from the stagnant mind.

He told of bloody fights, and how at length
The rage of battle gave his spirits strength:
'T was in the Indian seas his limb he lost,
And he was left half-dead upon the coast;
But living gain'd, 'mid rich aspiring men,
A fair subsistence by his ready pen.
"Thus," he continued, "pass'd unvaried years,
"Without events producing hopes or fears."
Augmented pay procured him decent wealth,
But years advancing undermined his health;
Then oft-times in delightful dream he flew
To England's shore, and scenes his childhood knew:
He saw his parents, saw his fav'rite maid,
No feature wrinkled, not a charm decay'd;
And thus excited, in his bosom rose
A wish so strong, it baffled his repose:
Anxious he felt on English earth to lie;
To view his native soil, and there to die.
He then described the gloom, the dread he found,
When first he landed on the chosen ground,
Where undefined was all he hoped and fear'd,
And how confused and troubled all appear'd;
His thoughts in past and present scenes employ'd,
All views in future blighted and destroy'd;
His were a medley of bewild'ring themes,
Sad as realities, and wild as dreams.

Here his relation closes, but his mind
Flies back again some resting-place to find;
Thus silent, musing through the day, he sees
His children sporting by those lofty trees,
Their mother singing in the shady scene,
Where the fresh springs burst o'er the lively green;—
So strong his eager fancy, he affrights
The faithful widow by its powerful flights;
For what disturbs him he aloud will tell,
And cry—"'T is she, my wife! my Isabel!
"Where are my children?"—Judith grieves to hear
How the soul works in sorrows so severe;
Assiduous all his wishes to attend,
Deprived of much, he yet may boast a friend;
Watch'd by her care, in sleep, his spirit takes
Its flight, and watchful finds her when he wakes.

'T is now her office; her attention see!
While her friend sleeps beneath that shading tree,
Careful, she guards him from the glowing heat,
And pensive muses at her Allen's feet.

And where is he? Ah! doubtless in those scenes
Of his best days, amid the vivid greens,
Fresh with unnumber'd rills, where ev'ry gale
Breathes the rich fragrance of the neighb'ring vale.
Smiles not his wife, and listens as there comes
The night-bird's music from the thick'ning glooms?
And as he sits with all these treasures nigh,
Blaze not with fairy-light the phosphor-fly,
When like a sparkling gem it wheels illumined by?
This is the joy that now so plainly speaks
In the warm transient flushing of his cheeks;
For he is list'ning to the fancied noise
Of his own children, eager in their joys:
All this he feels, a dream's delusive bliss
Gives the expression, and the glow like this.
And now his Judith lays her knitting by,
These strong emotions in her friend to spy
For she can fully of their nature deem—
But see! he breaks the long-protracted theme,
And wakes, and cries—"My God! 't was but a dream."[5]

TALE III.

THE GENTLEMAN FARMER.

Pause then,
And weigh thy value with an even hand;
If thou beest rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough. *Merchant of Venice.*

Because I will not do them wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is (for which I may go the finer), I will live a bachelor.—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.—*Macbeth.*

His promises are, as he then was, mighty;
And his performance, as he now is, nothing.
Henry VIII.

Gwyn was a farmer, whom the farmers all,
Who dwelt around, "the *Gentleman*" would call;
Whether in pure humility or pride,
They only knew, and they would not decide.

[5] [This tale contains passages of great beauty and pathos. The story is simply that of a youth and a maiden in humble life, who had loved each other from their childhood, but were too poor to marry. The youth goes to the West Indies to push his fortune; but is captured by the Spaniards and carried to Mexico, where, in the course of time, though still sighing for his first love, he marries a Spanish girl, and lives twenty years with her and his children. He is then impressed and carried round the world for twenty years longer, and is at last moved by an irresistible impulse, when old, and shattered, and lonely, to seek his native town, and the scene of his youthful vows. He comes and finds his Judith, like himself, in a state of widowhood; but still brooding, like himself, over the memory of their early love. She had waited ten anxious years without tidings of him, and then married: and now, when all passion and fuel for passion is extinguished within them, the memory of their young attachment endears them to each other, and they still cling together, in sad and subdued affection, to the exclusion of all the rest of the world. The history of the growth and maturity of their earliest love is beautifully given. The sad and long-delayed return of the adventurer is described in a tone of genuine pathos, and in some places with such truth and force of colouring, as to outdo the efforts of the first dramatic representation. There is something sweet and touching, and in a high vein of poetry, in the story which Allen tells to Judith of all his adventures, and of those other ties, of which it still wrings her bosom to hear him speak. The close is extremely beautiful, and leaves upon the mind that impression of sadness which is both salutary and delightful, because it is akin to pity, and mingled with admiration and esteem.—Jeffrey.]

Far different he from that dull plodding tribe
Whom it was his amusement to describe;
Creatures no more enliven'd than a clod,
But treading still as their dull fathers trod;
Who lived in times when not a man had seen
Corn sown by drill, or thresh'd by a machine:
He was of those whose skill assigns the prize
For creatures fed in pens, and stalls, and sties;
And who, in places where improvers meet,
To fill the land with fatness, had a seat;
Who in large mansions live like petty kings,
And speak of farms but as amusing things;
Who plans encourage, and who journals keep,
And talk with lords about a breed of sheep.

Two are the species in this genus known;
One, who is rich in his profession grown,
Who yearly finds his ample stores increase,
From fortune's favours and a favouring lease;
Who rides his hunter, who his house adorns;
Who drinks his wine, and his disbursements scorns;
Who freely lives, and loves to show he can,—
This is the Farmer made the Gentleman.

The second species from the world is sent,
Tired with its strife, or with his wealth content;
In books and men beyond the former read,
To farming solely by a passion led,
Or by a fashion; curious in his land;
Now planning much, now changing what he plann'd;
Pleased by each trial, not by failures vex'd,
And ever certain to succeed the next;
Quick to resolve, and easy to persuade,—
This is the Gentleman, a Farmer made.

Gwyn was of these; he from the world with-
drew
Early in life, his reasons known to few;
Some disappointment said, some pure good sense,
The love of land, the press of indolence;
His fortune known, and coming to retire,
If not a Farmer, men had call'd him 'Squire.

Forty and five his years, no child or wife
Cross'd the still tenour of his chosen life;
Much land he purchased, planted far around,
And let some portions of superfluous ground
To farmers near him, not displeased to say
"My tenants," nor "our worthy landlord," they.

Fix'd in his farm, he soon display'd his skill
In small-boned lambs, the horse-hoe, and the
drill;
From these he rose to themes of nobler kind,
And show'd the riches of a fertile mind;
To all around their visits he repaid,
And thus his mansion and himself display'd.
His rooms were stately, rather fine than neat,
And guests politely call'd his house a Seat;
At much expense was each apartment graced,
His taste was gorgeous, but it still was taste;
In full festoons the crimson curtains fell,
The sofas rose in bold elastic swell;
Mirrors in gilded frames display'd the tints
Of glowing carpets and of colour'd prints;
The weary eye saw every object shine,
And all was costly, fanciful, and fine.

As with his friends he pass'd the social hours,
His generous spirit scorn'd to hide its powers;
Powers unexpected, for his eye and air
Gave no sure signs that eloquence was there;
Oft he began with sudden fire and force,
As loth to lose occasion for discourse;
Some, 't is observed, who feel a wish to speak,
Will a due place for introduction seek;
On to their purpose step by step they steal,
And all their way, by certain signals, feel;
Others plunge in at once, and never heed
Whose turn they take, whose purpose they impede;
Resolved to shine, they hasten to begin,
Of ending thoughtless—and of these was Gwyn.
And thus he spake:—

"It grieves me to the soul,
"To see how man submits to man's control;
"How overpower'd and shackled minds are led
"In vulgar tracks, and to submission bred;
"The coward never on himself relies,
"But to an equal for assistance flies;
"Man yields to custom, as he bows to fate,
"In all things ruled—mind, body, and estate;
"In pain, in sickness, we for cure apply,
"To them we know not, and we know not why;
"But that the creature has some jargon read,
"And got some Scotchman's system in his head;
"Some grave impostor, who will health ensure,
"Long as your patience or your wealth endure,
"But mark them well, the pale and sickly crew,
"They have not health, and can they give it you?
"These solemn cheats their various methods
choose,
"A system fires them, as a bard his muse:
"Hence wordy wars arise; the learn'd divide,
"And groaning patients curse each erring guide.

"Next, our affairs are govern'd, buy or sell,
"Upon the deed the law must fix its spell;
"Whether we hire or let, we must have still
"The dubious aid of an attorney's skill;
"They take a part in every man's affairs,
"And in all business some concern is theirs;
"Because mankind in ways prescribed are found
"Like flocks that follow on a beaten ground,
"Each abject nature in the way proceeds,
"That now to shearing, now to slaughter leads.[1]
"Should you offend, though meaning no offence,
"You have no safety in your innocence;
"The statute broken then is placed in view,
"And men must pay for crimes they never knew;
"Who would by law regain his plunder'd store,
"Would pick up fallen merc'ry from the floor;
"If he pursue it, here and there it slides,
"He would collect it, but it more divides;
"This part and this he stops, but still in vain,
"It slips aside, and breaks in parts again;
"Till, after time and pains, and care and cost,
"He finds his labour and his object lost.
"But most it grieves me (friends alone are round),
"To see a man in priestly fetters bound;

[1] [Original MS.:—

Because in beaten ways we ever tread,
And man by man, as sheep by sheep, is led,
None start aside, but in the paths proceed, &c.]

" Guides to the soul, these friends of Heaven contrive,
" Long as man lives, to keep his fears alive:
" Soon as an infant breathes, their rites begin;
" Who knows not sinning, must be freed from sin;
" Who needs no bond, must yet engage in vows;
" Who has no judgment, must a creed espouse:
" Advanced in life, our boys are bound by rules,
" Are catechised in churches, cloisters, schools,
" And train'd in thraldom to be fit for tools:
" The youth grown up, he now a partner needs,
" And lo! a priest, as soon as he succeeds.
" What man of sense can marriage-rites approve?
" What man of spirit can be bound to love?
" Forced to be kind! compell'd to be sincere!
" Do chains and fetters make companions dear?
" Pris'ners indeed we bind; but though the bond
" May keep them safe, it does not make them fond:
" The ring, the vow, the witness, licence, prayers,
" All parties known! made public all affairs!
" Such forms men suffer, and from these they date
" A deed of love begun with all they hate:
" Absurd! that none the beaten road should shun,
" But love to do what other dupes have done.

" Well, now your priest has made you one of twain,
" Look you for rest? Alas! you look in vain.
" *If* sick, he comes; you cannot die in peace,
" Till he attends to witness your release;
" To vex your soul, and urge you to confess
" The sins you feel, remember, or can guess;
" Nay, when departed, to your grave he goes—
" But there indeed he hurts not your repose.

" Such are our burthens; part we must sustain,
" But need not link new grievance to the chain:
" Yet men like idiots will their frames surround
" With these vile shackles, nor confess they 're bound;
" In all that most confines them they confide,
" Their slavery boast, and make their bonds their pride;
" E'en as the pressure galls them, they declare
" (Good souls!) how happy and how free they are!
" As madmen, pointing round their wretched cells,
" Cry, 'Lo! the palace where our honour dwells.'

" Such is our state: but I resolve to live
" By rules my reason and my feelings give;
" No legal guards shall keep enthrall'd my mind,
" No Slaves command me, and no teachers blind.
" Tempted by sins, let me their strength defy,
" But have no second in a surplice by;
" No bottle-holder, with officious aid,
" To comfort conscience, weaken'd and afraid:
" Then if I yield, my frailty is not known;
" And, if I stand, the glory is my own.

" When Truth and Reason are our friends, we seem
" Alive! awake!—the superstitious dream.

" Oh! then, fair Truth, for thee alone I seek,
" Friend to the wise, supporter of the weak;
" From thee we learn whate'er is right and just;
" Forms to despise, professions to distrust;
" Creeds to reject, pretensions to deride,
" And, following thee, to follow none beside."

Such was the speech: it struck upon the ear
Like sudden thunder none expect to hear.
He saw men's wonder with a manly pride,
And gravely smiled at guest electrified.
" A farmer this!" they said, "Oh! let him seek
" That place where he may for his country speak;
" On some great question to harangue for hours,
" While speakers, hearing, envy nobler powers!"

Wisdom like this, as all things rich and rare,
Must be acquired with pains, and kept with care;
In books he sought it, which his friends might view,
When their kind host the guarding curtain drew.
There were historic works for graver hours,
And lighter verse to spur the languid powers;
There metaphysics, logic there had place;
But of devotion not a single trace—
Save what is taught in Gibbon's florid page,
And other guides of this inquiring age:
There Hume appear'd, and near a splendid book
Composed by Gay's " good lord of Bolingbroke:"[2]
With these were mix'd the light, the free, the vain,
And from a corner peep'd the sage Tom Paine:
Here four neat volumes Chesterfield were named,
For manners much and easy morals famed;
With chaste Memoirs of females, to be read
When deeper studies had confused the head.

Such his resources, treasures where he sought
For daily knowledge till his mind was fraught:
Then, when his friends were present, for their use
He would the riches he had stored produce;
He found his lamp burn clearer when each day
He drew for all he purposed to display;
For these occasions, forth his knowledge sprung,
As mustard quickens on a bed of dung:
All was prepared, and guests allow'd the praise
For what they saw he could so quickly raise.

Such this new friend; and when the year came round,
The same impressive, reasoning sage was found:
Then, too, was seen the pleasant mansion graced
With a fair damsel—his no vulgar taste;
The neat *Rebecca*—sly, observant, still,
Watching his eye, and waiting on his will;
Simple yet smart her dress, her manners meek,
Her smiles spoke for her, she would seldom speak:
But watch'd each look, each meaning to detect,
And (pleased with notice) felt for all neglect.

With her lived Gwyn a sweet harmonious life,
Who, forms excepted, was a charming wife;
The wives indeed, so made by vulgar law,
Affected scorn, and censured what they saw,

[2 ["Lo I, who erst beneath a tree
Sang Bumkinet and Bowzybee,
And Blouzelind, and Marian bright,
In apron blue, or apron white,
Now write my sonnets in a book,
For my good lord of Bolingbroke."
GAY, *Prologue to Shepherd's Week.*]

And what they saw not, fancied; said 't was sin,
And took no notice of the wife of Gwyn:
But he despised their rudeness, and would prove
Theirs was compulsion and distrust, not love;
"Fools as they were! could they conceive that rings
"And parsons' blessings were substantial things?"
They answer'd "Yes;" while he contemptuous spoke
Of the low notions held by simple folk;
Yet, strange that anger in a man so wise
Should from the notions of these fools arise;
Can they so vex us, whom we so despise?

Brave as he was, our hero felt a dread
Lest those who saw him kind should think him led;
If to his bosom fear a visit paid,
It was, lest he should be supposed afraid:
Hence sprang his orders; not that he desired
The things when done: obedience he required;
And thus, to prove his absolute command,
Ruled every heart, and moved each subject hand;
Assent he ask'd for every word and whim,
To prove that *he alone was king of him.*

The still Rebecca, who her station knew,
With ease resign'd the honours not her due:
Well pleased she saw that men her board would grace,
And wish'd not there to see a female face;
When by her lover she his spouse was styled,
Polite she thought it, and demurely smiled;
But when he wanted wives and maidens round
So to regard her, she grew grave and frown'd;
And sometimes whisper'd—"Why should you respect
"These people's notions, yet their forms reject?"

Gwyn, though from marriage bond and fetter free,
Still felt abridgment in his liberty;
Something of hesitation he betray'd,
And in her presence thought of what he said.
Thus fair Rebecca, though she walk'd astray,
His creed rejecting, judged it right to pray,
To be at church, to sit with serious looks,
To read her Bible and her Sunday-books:
She hated all those new and daring themes,
And call'd his free conjectures "devil's dreams:"
She honour'd still the priesthood in her fall,
And claim'd respect and reverence for them all;
Call'd them "of sin's destructive power the foes,
"And not such blockheads as he might suppose."
Gwyn to his friends would smile, and sometimes say,
"'T is a kind fool; why vex her in her way?"
Her way she took, and still had more in view,
For she contrived that he should take it too.
The daring freedom of his soul, 't was plain,
In part was lost in a divided reign;
A king and queen, who yet in prudence sway'd
Their peaceful state, and were in turn obey'd.

Yet such our fate, that when we plan the best,
Something arises to disturb our rest:
For though in spirits high, in body strong,
Gwyn something felt—he knew not what—was wrong;
He wish'd to know; for he believed the thing,
If unremoved, would other evil bring:
"She must perceive, of late he could not eat,
"And when he walk'd he trembled on his feet:
"He had forebodings, and he seem'd as one
"Stopp'd on the road, or threaten'd by a dun;
"He could not live, and yet, should he apply
"To those physicians—he must sooner die."

The mild Rebecca heard with some disdain,
And some distress, her friend and lord complain:
His death she fear'd not, but had painful doubt
What his distemper'd nerves might bring about;
With power like hers she dreaded an ally,
And yet there was a person in her eye;—
She thought, debated, fix'd—"Alas!" she said,
"A case like yours must be no more delay'd;
"You hate these doctors; well! but were a friend
"And doctor one, your fears would have an end:
"My cousin *Mollet*—Scotland holds him now—
"Is above all men skilful, all allow;
"Of late a Doctor, and within a while
"He means to settle in this favour'd isle:
"Should he attend you, with his skill profound,
"You must be safe, and shortly would be sound."

When men in health against Physicians rail,
They should consider that their nerves may fail;
Who calls a Lawyer rogue, may find, too late,
On one of these depends his whole estate;
Nay, when the world can nothing more produce,
The Priest, th' insulted priest, may have his use:
Ease, health, and comfort lift a man so high,
These powers are dwarfs that he can scarcely spy;
Pain, sickness, languor, keep a man so low,
That these neglected dwarfs to giants grow:
Happy is he who through the medium sees
Of clear good sense—but Gwyn was not of these.

He heard and he rejoiced: "Ah! let him come,
"And till he fixes, make my house his home."
Home came the Doctor—he was much admired;
He told the patient what his case required;
His hours for sleep, his time to eat and drink,
When he should ride, read, rest, compose, or think.
Thus join'd peculiar skill and art profound,
To make the fancy-sick no more than fancy-sound.

With such attention, who could long be ill?
Returning health proclaim'd the Doctor's skill.
Presents and praises from a grateful heart
Were freely offer'd on the patient's part;
In high repute the Doctor seem'd to stand,
But still had got no footing in the land;
And, as he saw the seat was rich and fair,
He felt disposed to fix his station there:
To gain his purpose he perform'd the part
Of a good actor, and prepared to start;
Not like a traveller in a day serene,
When the sun shone and when the roads were clean;
Not like the pilgrim, when the morning grey,
The ruddy eve succeeding, sends his way;
But in a season when the sharp east wind
Had all its influence on a nervous mind;
When past the parlour's front it fiercely blew,
And Gwyn sat pitying every bird that flew,
This strange physician said—"Adieu! adieu!

" Farewell!—Heaven bless you!—if you should—
but no,
" You need not fear—farewell! 'tis time to go."

The Doctor spoke; and as the patient heard,
His old disorders (dreadful train!) appear'd;
" He felt the tingling tremor, and the stress
" Upon his nerves that he could not express;
" Should his good friend forsake him, he perhaps
' Might meet his death, and surely a relapse."

So, as the Doctor seem'd intent to part,
He cried in terror—" Oh! be where thou art:
" Come, thou art young, and unengaged; oh! come,
" Make me thy friend, give comfort to mine home;
" I have now symptoms that require thine aid,
" Do, Doctor, stay:"—th' obliging Doctor stay'd.

Thus Gwyn was happy; he had now a friend,
And a meek spouse on whom he could depend:
But now possess'd of male and female guide,
Divided power he thus must subdivide:
In earlier days he rode, or sat at ease
Reclined, and having but himself to please;
Now if he would a fav'rite nag bestride,
He sought permission—" Doctor, may I ride?"
(Rebecca's eye her sovereign pleasure told)—
" I think you may, but guarded from the cold,
" Ride forty minutes."—Free and happy soul,
He scorn'd submission, and a man's control;
But where such friends in every care unite
All for his good, obedience is delight.

Now Gwyn a sultan bade affairs adieu,
Led and assisted by the faithful two;
The favourite fair, Rebecca, near him sat,
And whisper'd whom to love, assist, or hate;
While the chief vizier eased his lord of cares,
And bore himself the burden of affairs:
No dangers could from such alliance flow,
But from that law that changes all below.

When wintry winds with leaves bestrew'd the ground,
And men were coughing all the village round;
When public papers of invasion told,
Diseases, famines, perils new and old;
When philosophic writers fail'd to clear
The mind of gloom, and lighter works to cheer;
Then came fresh terrors on our hero's mind—
Fears unforeseen, and feelings undefined.

" In outward ills," he cried, " I rest assured
" Of my friend's aid; they will in time be cured;
" But can his art subdue, resist, control
" These inward griefs and troubles of the soul?
" Oh! my Rebecca! my disorder'd mind
" No help in study, none in thought can find;
" What must I do, Rebecca?" She proposed
The Parish-guide; but what could be disclosed
To a proud priest?—" No! him have I defied,
" Insulted, slighted—shall he be my guide?
" But one there is, and if report be just,
" A wise good man, whom I may safely trust;
" Who goes from house to house, from ear to ear,
" To make his truths, his Gospel-truths, appear;
" True if indeed they be, 'tis time that I should hear:
" Send for that man; and if report be just,
" I, like Cornelius, will the teacher trust;
" But if deceiver, I the vile deceit
" Shall soon discover, and discharge the cheat."

To Doctor Mollet was the grief confess'd,
While Gwyn the freedom of his mind express'd;
Yet own'd it was to ills and errors prone,
And he for guilt and frailty must atone.
" My books, perhaps," the wav'ring mortal cried,
" Like men deceive; I would be satisfied;—
" And to my soul the pious man may bring
" Comfort and light:—do let me try the thing."

The cousins met, what pass'd with Gwyn was told:
" Alas!" the Doctor said, " how hard to hold
" These easy minds, where all impressions made
" At first sink deeply, and then quickly fade;
" For while so strong these new-born fancies reign,
" We must divert them, to oppose is vain:
" You see him valiant now, he scorns to heed
" The bigot's threat'nings or the zealot's creed;
" Shook by a dream, he next for truth receives
" What frenzy teaches, and what fear believes;
" And this will place him in the power of one
" Whom we must seek, because we cannot shun."

Wisp had been ostler at a busy inn,
Where he beheld and grew in dread of sin;
Then to a Baptists' meeting found his way,
Became a convert, and was taught to pray;
Then preach'd; and, being earnest and sincere,
Brought other sinners to religious fear:
Together grew his influence and his fame,
Till our dejected hero heard his name:
His little failings were a grain of pride,
Raised by the numbers he presumed to guide:
A love of presents, and of lofty praise
For his meek spirit and his humble ways;
But though this spirit would on flattery feed,
No praise could blind him and no arts mislead:—
To him the Doctor made the wishes known
Of his good patron, but conceal'd his own;
He of all teachers had distrust and doubt,
And was reserved in what he came about;
Though on a plain and simple message sent,
He had a secret and a bold intent:
Their minds at first were deeply veil'd; disguise
Form'd the slow speech, and oped the eager eyes;
Till by degrees sufficient light was thrown
On every view, and all the business shown.
Wisp, as a skilful guide who led the blind,
Had powers to rule and awe the vapourish mind;
But not the changeful will, the wavering fear to bind:
And should his conscience give him leave to dwell
With Gwyn, and every rival power expel
(A dubious point), yet he, with every care,
Might soon the lot of the rejected share;
And other Wisps he found like him to reign,
And then be thrown upon the world again:
He thought it prudent then, and felt it just,
The present guides of his new friend to trust:

True, he conceived, to touch the harder heart
Of the cool Doctor, was beyond his art;
But mild Rebecca he could surely sway,
While Gwyn would follow where she led the way:
So to do good, (and why a duty shun,
Because rewarded for the good when done?)
He with his friends would join in all they plann'd,
Save when his faith or feelings should withstand;
There he must rest sole judge of his affairs,
While they might rule exclusively in theirs.

When Gwyn his message to the teacher sent,
He fear'd his friends would show their discontent;
And prudent seem'd it to th' attendant pair,
Not all at once to show an aspect fair:
On Wisp they seem'd to look with jealous eye,
And fair Rebecca was demure and shy;
But by degrees the teacher's worth they knew,
And were so kind, they seem'd converted too.

Wisp took occasion to the nymph to say,
"You must be married: will you name the day?"
She smiled,—"'T is well: but should he not comply,
"Is it quite safe th' experiment to try?"—
"My child," the teacher said, "who feels remorse,
"(And feels not he?) must wish relief of course:
"And can he find it, while he fears the crime?—
"You must be married; will you name the time?"

Glad was the patron as a man could be,
Yet marvell'd too, to find his guides agree;
"But what the cause?" he cried; "'t is genuine love for me."

Each found his part, and let one act describe
The powers and honours of th' accordant tribe:—
A man for favour to the mansion speeds,
And cons his threefold task as he proceeds;
To teacher Wisp he bows with humble air,
And begs his interest for a barn's repair:
Then for the Doctor he inquires, who loves
To hear applause for what his skill improves,
And gives for praise, assent—and to the Fair
He brings of pullets a delicious pair;
Thus sees a peasant, with discernment nice,
A love of power, conceit, and avarice.

Lo! now the change complete: the convert Gwyn
Has sold his books, and has renounced his sin;
Mollet his body orders, Wisp his soul,
And o'er his purse the Lady takes control;
No friends beside he needs, and none attend—
Soul, body, and estate, has each a friend;
And fair Rebecca leads a virtuous life—
She rules a mistress, and she reigns a wife.[3]

[3] [This tale is of a coarser texture than the preceding ones, though full of acute observation and graphic delineation of ordinary characters. The hero is not a farmer turned gentleman, but a gentleman turned farmer—a conceited, active, talking, domineering sort of person—who plants, and eats, and drinks with great vigour—keeps a mistress, and speaks with audacious scorn of the tyranny of wives, and the impositions of priests, lawyers, and physicians. Being but a shallow fellow, however, at bottom, his confidence in his opinions declines gradually as his health decays; and being seized with some maladies in his stomach, he ends with marrying his mistress, and submitting to be triply governed by three of her confederates, in the respective characters of a quack doctor, a methodist preacher, and a projecting land steward.—JEFFREY.]

TALE IV.

PROCRASTINATION.[1]

Heaven witness
I have been to you ever true and humble.
Henry VIII.

Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you all the wealth I had.
Merchant of Venice.

The fatal time
Cuts off all ceremonies and vows of love,
And ample interchange of sweet discourse,
Which so long sunder'd friends should dwell upon.
Richard III.

I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers.
Henry IV.

Farewell,
Thou pure impiety, thou impious purity,
For thee I 'll lock up all the gates of love.
Much Ado about Nothing.

Love will expire—the gay, the happy dream
Will turn to scorn, indiff'rence, or esteem:
Some favour'd pairs, in this exchange, are blest,
Nor sigh for raptures in a state of rest;
Others, ill match'd, with minds unpair'd, repent
At once the deed, and know no more content;
From joy to anguish they, in haste, decline,
And, with their fondness, their esteem resign;
More luckless still their fate, who are the prey
Of long-protracted hope and dull delay:
'Mid plans of bliss the heavy hours pass on,
Till love is wither'd, and till joy is gone.

This gentle flame two youthful hearts possess'd,
The sweet disturber of unenvied rest;
The prudent *Dinah* was the maid beloved,
And the kind *Rupert* was the swain approved:
A wealthy Aunt her gentle niece sustain'd,
He, with a father, at his desk remain'd;
The youthful couple, to their vows sincere,
Thus loved expectant; year succeeding year,
With pleasant views and hopes, but not a prospect near.
Rupert some comfort in his station saw,
But the poor virgin lived in dread and awe;
Upon her anxious looks the widow smiled,
And bade her wait, "for she was yet a child."
She for her neighbour had a due respect,
Nor would his son encourage or reject;

[1] [Mr. Crabbe's sons have no doubt but that their mother's residence, at one time, with her rich old aunt, who was very partial to her, and abounded in trinkets, suggested this supposition.]

And thus the pair, with expectations vain,
Beheld the seasons change and change again:
Meantime the nymph her tender tales perused,
Where cruel aunts impatient girls refused:
While hers, though teasing, boasted to be kind,
And she, resenting, to be all resign'd.

The dame was sick, and when the youth applied
For her consent, she groan'd, and cough'd, and cried,
Talk'd of departing, and again her breath
Drew hard, and cough'd, and talk'd again of death:
"Here may you live, my Dinah! here the boy
"And you together my estate enjoy:"
Thus to the lovers was her mind express'd,
Till they forbore to urge the fond request.

Servant, and nurse, and comforter, and friend,
Dinah had still some duty to attend;
But yet their walk, when Rupert's evening call
Obtain'd an hour, made sweet amends for all;
So long they now each other's thoughts had known,
That nothing seem'd exclusively their own:
But with the common wish, the mutual fear,
They now had travelled to their thirtieth year.

At length a prospect open'd—but alas!
Long time must yet, before the union, pass.
Rupert was call'd, in other clime, t'increase
Another's wealth, and toil for future peace.
Loth were the lovers; but the aunt declared
'T was fortune's call, and they must be prepared:
"You now are young, and for this brief delay,
"And Dinah's care, what I bequeath will pay;
"All will be yours; nay, love, suppress that sigh;
"The kind must suffer, and the best must die:"
Then came the cough, and strong the signs it gave
Of holding long contention with the grave.

The lovers parted with a gloomy view,
And little comfort, but that both were true;
He for uncertain duties doom'd to steer,
While hers remain'd too certain and severe.

Letters arrived, and Rupert fairly told
"His cares were many, and his hopes were cold:
"The view more clouded, that was never fair,
"And love alone preserved him from despair;"
In other letters brighter hopes he drew,
"His friends were kind, and he believed them true."

When the sage widow Dinah's grief descried,
She wonder'd much why one so happy sigh'd:
Then bade her see how her poor aunt sustain'd
The ills of life, nor murmur'd nor complain'd.

To vary pleasures, from the lady's chest
Were drawn the pearly string and tabby vest;
Beads, jewels, laces, all their value shown,
With the kind notice—"They will be your own."

This hope, these comforts, cherish'd day by day,
To Dinah's bosom made a gradual way;
Till love of treasure had as large a part,
As love of Rupert, in the virgin's heart.
Whether it be that tender passions fail,
From their own nature, while the strong prevail;
Or whether av'rice, like the poison-tree,[2]
Kills all beside it, and alone will be;[3]
Whatever cause prevail'd, the pleasure grew
In Dinah's soul,—she loved the hoards to view;
With lively joy those comforts she survey'd,
And love grew languid in the careful maid.

Now the grave niece partook the widow's cares,
Look'd to the great, and ruled the small affairs;
Saw clean'd the plate, arranged the china-show,
And felt her passion for a shilling grow:
Th' indulgent aunt increased the maid's delight,
By placing tokens of her wealth in sight;
She loved the value of her bonds to tell,
And spake of stocks, and how they rose and fell.

This passion grew, and gain'd at length such sway,
That other passions shrank to make it way;
Romantic notions now the heart forsook,
She read but seldom, and she changed her book;
And for the verses she was wont to send,
Short was her prose, and she was Rupert's friend.
Seldom she wrote, and then the widow's cough,
And constant call, excused her breaking off;
Who now oppressed, no longer took the air,
But sat and dozed upon an easy chair.
The cautious doctor saw the case was clear,
But judged it best to have companions near;
They came, they reason'd, they prescribed,—at last,
Like honest men, they said their hopes were past;
Then came a priest—'t is comfort to reflect
When all is over, there was no neglect:
And all was over.—By her husband's bones,
The widow rests beneath the sculptured stones,
That yet record their fondness and their fame,
While all they left the virgin's care became;
Stock, bonds, and buildings; it disturb'd her rest,
To think what load of troubles she possess'd:
Yet, if a trouble, she resolved to take
Th' important duty for the donor's sake;
She too was heiress to the widow's taste,
Her love of hoarding, and her dread of waste.

[2] Allusion is here made, not to the well-known species of *sumach*, called the poison-oak, *toxicodendron*, but to the *upas*, or poison-tree of Java: whether it be real or imaginary, this is no proper place for inquiry.

[3] ["Fierce in dread silence on the blasted heath
Fell Upas sits, the Hydra tree of death.
Lo! from one root, the envenom'd soil below,
A thousand vegetative serpents grow;
In shining rays the scaly monster spreads
O'er ten square leagues his far diverging heads,
Or in one trunk entwists his tangled form,
Looks o'er the clouds, and hisses in the storm," &c.
DARWIN's *Loves of the Plants*.

For an authentic refutation of the gross imposition practised on the people of Europe, by the romance of Foersch, on the subject of this tree, see Raffles's *History of Java*, vol. i., p. 44. "Almost every one," says Sir Thomas, "has heard of its fabulous history—a history which, from its extravagant nature, its susceptibility of poetical ornament, its alliance with the cruelties of a despotic government, and the sparkling genius of Darwin, whose purpose it answered to adopt and personify it as a malignant spirit, has obtained almost equal currency with the wonders of the Lerna hydra, the Chimera, or any other of the classic fictions of antiquity."]

Sometimes the past would on her mind intrude,
And then a conflict full of care ensued;
The thoughts of Rupert on her mind would press,
His worth she knew, but doubted his success:
Of old she saw him heedless; what the boy
Forebore to save, the man would not enjoy;
Oft had he lost the chance that care would seize,
Willing to live, but more to live at ease:
Yet could she not a broken vow defend,
And Heav'n, perhaps, might yet enrich her friend.

Month after month was pass'd, and all were spent
In quiet comfort, and in rich content;
Miseries there were, and woes the world around,
But these had not her pleasant dwelling found;
She knew that mothers grieved, and widows wept,
And she was sorry, said her prayers, and slept:
Thus passed the seasons, and to Dinah's board
Gave what the seasons to the rich afford;
For she indulged, nor was her heart so small,
That one strong passion should engross it all.

A love of splendour now with av'rice strove,
And oft appeared to be the stronger love:
A secret pleasure fill'd the Widow's breast,
When she reflected on the hoards possess'd;
But livelier joy inspired th' ambitious Maid,
When she the purchase of those hoards display'd:
In small but splendid room she loved to see
That all was placed in view and harmony.
There, as with eager glance she look'd around,
She much delight in every object found.
While books devout were near her—to destroy,
Should it arise, an overflow of joy.

Within that fair apartment guests might see
The comforts cull'd for wealth by vanity:
Around the room an Indian paper blazed,
With lively tint and figures boldly raised;
Silky and soft upon the floor below,
Th' elastic carpet rose with crimson glow;
All things around implied both cost and care,
What met the eye was elegant or rare:
Some curious trifles round the room were laid,
By hope presented to the wealthy Maid;
Within a costly case of varnish'd wood,
In level rows, her polish'd volumes stood;
Shown as a favour to a chosen few,
To prove what beauty for a book could do:
A silver urn with curious work was fraught;
A silver lamp from Grecian pattern wrought:
Above her head, all gorgeous to behold,
A time-piece stood on feet of burnish'd gold;
A stag's-head crest adorn'd the pictured case,
Through the pure crystal shone the enamel'd face;
And while on brilliants moved the hands of steel,
It click'd from pray'r to pray'r, from meal to meal.

Here as the lady sat, a friendly pair
Stept in t' admire the view, and took their chair:
They then related how the young and gay
Were thoughtless wandering in the broad highway:
How tender damsels sail'd in tilted boats,
And laugh'd with wicked men in scarlet coats;
And how we live in such degen'rate times,
That men conceal their wants and show their crimes;
While vicious deeds are screen'd by fashion's name,
And what was once our pride is now our shame.

Dinah was musing, as her friends discoursed,
When these last words a sudden entrance forced
Upon her mind, and what was once her pride
And now her shame, some painful views supplied;
Thoughts of the past within her bosom press'd,
And there a change was felt, and was confess'd:
While thus the Virgin strove with secret pain,
Her mind was wandering o'er the troubled main;
Still she was silent, nothing seem'd to see,
But sat and sigh'd in pensive reverie.

The friends prepared new subjects to begin,
When tall Susannah, maiden starch, stalk'd in;
Not in her ancient mode, sedate and slow,
As when she came, the mind she knew, to know;
Nor as, when list'ning half an hour before,
She twice or thrice tapp'd gently at the door;
But all decorum cast in wrath aside,
"I think the devil 's in the man!" she cried;
"A huge tall sailor, with his tawny cheek
"And pitted face, will with my lady speak;
"He grinn'd an ugly smile, and said he knew,
"Please you, my lady, 't would be joy to you:
"What must I answer?"—Trembling and distress'd
Sank the pale Dinah by her fears oppress'd;
When thus alarm'd, and brooking no delay,
Swift to her room the stranger made his way.

"Revive, my love!" said he, "I've done thee harm;
"Give me thy pardon," and he look'd alarm:
Meantime the prudent Dinah had contrived
Her soul to question, and she then revived.

"See! my good friend," and then she raised her head,
"The bloom of life, the strength of youth is fled;
"Living we die; to us the world is dead;
"We parted bless'd with health, and I am now
"Age-struck and feeble—so I find art thou;
"Thine eye is sunken, furrow'd is thy face,
"And downward look'st thou—so we run our race;
"And happier they whose race is nearly run,
"Their troubles over, and their duties done."

"True, lady, true—we are not girl and boy,
"But time has left us something to enjoy."
"What! thou hast learn'd my fortune?—yes, I live
"To feel how poor the comforts wealth can give:
"Thou too perhaps art wealthy; but our fate
"Still mocks our wishes, wealth is come too late."

"To me nor late nor early; I am come
"Poor as I left thee to my native home:
"Nor yet," said Rupert, "will I grieve; 't is mine
"To share thy comforts, and the glory thine:
"For thou wilt gladly take that generous part
"That both exalts and gratifies the heart;
"While mine rejoices"—"Heavens!" return'd the maid,
"This talk to one so wither'd and decay'd?
"No! all my care is now to fit my mind
"For other spousal, and to die resigned:

"As friend and neighbour, I shall hope to see
"These noble views, this pious love [illegible]e;
"That we together may the change
"Guides and spectators in each othe[illegible]tte;
"When fellow pilgrims, we shall daily crave
"The mutual prayer that arms us for the grave."

Half angry, half in doubt, the lover gazed
On the meek maiden, by her speech amazed;
"Dinah," said he, "dost thou respect thy vows?
"What spousal mean'st thou?—thou art Rupert's spouse;
"That chance is mine to take, and thine to give:
"But, trifling this, if we together live:
"Can I believe, that, after all the past,
"Our vows, our loves, thou wilt be false at last?
"Something thou hast—I know not what—in view;
"I find thee pious—let me find thee true."

"Ah! cruel this; but do, my friend, depart;
"And to its feelings leave my wounded heart."

"Nay, speak at once; and Dinah, let me know,
"Mean'st thou to take me, now I'm wreck'd, in tow?
"Be fair; nor longer keep me in the dark;
"Am I forsaken for a trimmer spark?
"Heaven's spouse thou art not; nor can I believe
"That God accepts her who will man deceive:
"True I am shatter'd, I have service seen,
"And service done, and have in trouble been;
"My cheek (it shames me not) has lost its red,
"And the brown buff is o'er my features spread:
"Perchance my speech is rude; for I among
"Th' untamed have been, in temper and in tongue;
"Have been trepann'd, have lived in toil and care,
"And wrought for wealth I was not doom'd to share;
"It touch'd me deeply, for I felt a pride
"In gaining riches for my destin'd bride:
"Speak then my fate; for these my sorrows past,
"Time lost, youth fled, hope wearied, and at last
"This doubt of thee—a childish thing to tell,
"But certain truth—my very throat they swell:
"They stop the breath, and but for shame could I
"Give way to weakness, and with passion cry;
"These are unmanly struggles, but I feel
"This hour must end them, and perhaps will heal."

Here Dinah sigh'd, as if afraid to speak—
And then repeated—"They were frail and weak:
"His soul she lov'd, and hoped he had the grace
"To fix his thoughts upon a better place."

She ceased;—with steady glance, as if to see
The very root of this hypocrisy,—
He her small fingers moulded in his hard
And bronzed broad hand; then told her his regard,
His best respect were gone, but love had still
Hold in his heart, and govern'd yet the will—
Or he would curse her:—saying this, he threw
The hand in scorn away, and bade adieu
To every lingering hope, with every care in view.

Proud and indignant, suffering, sick, and poor,
He grieved unseen: and spoke of love no more—
Till all he felt in indignation died,
As hers had sunk in avarice and pride.

In health declining, as in mind distress'd,
To some in power his troubles he confess'd,
And shares a parish-gift;—at prayers he sees
The pious Dinah dropp'd upon her knees;
Thence as she walks the street with stately air
As chance directs, oft meet the parted pair;
When he, with thickset coat of badgeman's blue,
Moves near her shaded silk of changeful hue;
When his thin locks of grey approach her braid,
A costly purchase made in Beauty's aid;
When his frank air, and his unstudied pace,
Are seen with her soft manner, air, and grace;
And his plain artless look with her sharp meaning face;
It might some wonder in a stranger move,
How these together could have talk'd of love.

Behold them now!—see there a tradesman stands,
And humbly hearkens to some fresh commands;
He moves to speak, she interrupts him—"Stay,"
Her air expresses,—"Hark to what I say!"
Ten paces off, poor Rupert on a seat
Has taken refuge from the noon-day heat,
His eyes on her intent, as if to find
What were the movements of that subtle mind:
How still!—how earnest is he!—it appears
His thoughts are wand'ring through his earlier years;
Through years of fruitless labour, to the day
When all his earthly prospects died away:
"Had I," he thinks, "been wealthier of the two,
"Would she have found me so unkind, untrue?
"Or knows not man when poor, what man when rich will do?
"Yes, yes! I feel that I had faithful proved,
"And should have soothed and raised her, bless'd and loved."

But Dinah moves—she had observed before
The pensive Rupert at an humble door:
Some thoughts of pity raised by his distress,
Some feeling touch of ancient tenderness;
Religion, duty urged the maid to speak,
In terms of kindness to a man so weak;
But pride forbade, and to return would prove
She felt the shame of his neglected love;
Nor wrapp'd in silence could she pass, afraid
Each eye should see her, and each heart upbraid;
One way remain'd—the way the Levite took,
Who without mercy could on misery look;
(A way perceiv'd by craft, approved by pride),
She cross'd and pass'd him on the other side.[4]

[4] [This tale has something of the character of the 'Parting Hour;' but more painful and less refined. It is founded like it on the story of a betrothed youth and maiden, whose marriage is prevented by their poverty; and the youth goes to pursue his fortune at sea, while the damsel awaits his return with an old female relation at home. He is crossed with many disasters, and is not heard of for many years. In the mean time, the virgin gradually imbibes her aunt's paltry love for wealth and finery; and when she comes, after long sordid expectation, to inherit her hoard, feels that those new tastes

TALE V.

THE PATRON.[1]

It were all one,
That I should love a bright peculiar star,
And think to wed it; she is so much above me:
In her bright radiance and collateral heat
Must I be comforted, not in her sphere.
All's Well that Ends Well.

Poor wretches, that depend
On greatness' favours, dream as I have done,—
Wake and find nothing. *Cymbeline.*

And since ——
Th' affliction of my mind amends, with which
I fear a madness held me. *Tempest.*

A BOROUGH-BAILIFF, who to law was train'd,
A wife and sons in decent state maintain'd;
He had his way in life's rough ocean steer'd,
And many a rock and coast of danger clear'd;
He saw where others fail'd, and care had he,
Others in him should not such failings see:
His sons in various busy states were placed,
And all began the sweets of gain to taste,
Save *John*, the younger, who, of sprightly parts,
Felt not a love for money-making arts:
In childhood feeble, he, for country air,
Had long resided with a rustic pair;
All round whose room were doleful ballads, songs,
Of lovers' sufferings and of ladies' wrongs;
Of peevish ghosts who came at dark midnight,
For breach of promise, guilty men to fright;
Love, marriage, murder, were the themes, with these,
All that on idle, ardent spirits seize;
Robbers at land and pirates on the main,
Enchanters foil'd, spells broken, giants slain;
Legends of love, with tales of halls and bowers,
Choice of rare songs, and garlands of choice flowers,
And all the hungry mind without a choice devours.

From village-children kept apart by pride,
With such enjoyments, and without a guide,
In [illegible]ired [illegible]ugs all such works infused,
John [illegible] pen, and wrote as he perused:
With [illegible] fancy he could make his knight
Slay hal[illegible]st, and put the rest to flight;
With the like knowledge he could make him ride
From isle to isle at *Parthenissa's*[2] side;
And with a heart yet free, no busy brain
Form'd wilder notions of delight and pain,
The raptures smiles create, the anguish of disdain.

Such were the fruits of John's poetic toil—
Weeds, but still proofs of vigour in the soil:
He nothing purposed but with vast delight,
Let Fancy loose, and wonder'd at her flight:
His notions of poetic worth were high,
And of his own still-hoarded poetry;—
These to his father's house he bore with pride,
A miser's treasure, in his room to hide;
Till spurr'd by glory, to a reading friend
He kindly show'd the sonnets he had penn'd:
With erring judgment, though with heart sincere,
That friend exclaim'd, "These beauties must appear."
In magazines they claim'd their share of fame,
Though undistinguish'd by their author's name;
And with delight the young enthusiast found
The muse of Marcus with applauses crown'd.
This heard the father, and with some alarm;
"The boy," said he, "will neither trade nor farm,
"He for both law and physic is unfit,
"Wit he may have, but cannot live on wit:
"Let him his talents then to learning give,
"Where verse is honour'd, and where poets live."

John kept his terms at college unreproved,
Took his degree, and left the life he loved;
Not yet ordain'd, his leisure he employ'd
In the light labours he so much enjoy'd;
His favourite notions and his daring views
Were cherish'd still, and he adored the Muse.

"A little time, and he should burst to light,
"And admiration of the world excite;
"And every friend, now cool and apt to blame
"His fond pursuit, would wonder at his fame."
When led by fancy, and from view retired,
He call'd before him all his heart desired;
"Fame shall be mine, then wealth shall I possess,
"And beauty next an ardent lover bless;

have supplanted every warmer emotion in her bosom; and, secretly hoping never more to see her youthful lover, gives herself up to comfortable gossiping and formal ostentatious devotion. At last, when she is set in her fine parlour, with her china, and toys, and prayer-books around her, the impatient man bursts into her presence, and reclaims her vows. She answers coldly, that she has now done with the world, and only studies how to prepare to die; and exhorts him to betake himself to the same needful meditations. Nothing can be more forcible or true to nature than the description of the effect of this cold-blooded cant on the warm and unsuspecting nature of her disappointed suitor.—JEFFREY.]

[1] [The numberless allusions to the nature of a literary dependant's existence in a great lord's house which occur in Mr. Crabbe's writings, and especially in the tale of 'The Patron,' are quite enough to lead any one who knew his character and feelings to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the kindness and condescension of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland,—which were uniform, and of which he always spoke with gratitude,—the situation he filled at Belvoir was attended with many painful circumstances, and productive in his mind of some of the acutest sensations of wounded pride that have ever been traced by any pen.—*Life, antè*, p. 32.

"Did any of my sons show poetical talent, of which, to my great satisfaction, there are no appearances, the first thing I should do would be to inculcate upon him the duty of cultivating some honourable profession, and qualifying himself to play a more respectable part in society than the mere poet. And as the best corollary of my doctrine, I would make him get your tale of 'The Patron' by heart from beginning to end."—*Sir Walter Scott to Mr. Crabbe.* See *antè*, p. 57.]

[2] [The title of a romance written by Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, and published in 1665. "Budgell, in his History of the Boyles, says that 'few who can relish any romance will dislike this:' and Langbane tells us that 'it yields not, either in beauty, language, or design, to the works of the famous Scuderi or Calprenade, however famous they may be amongst the French for pieces of this nature.'"—*Biog. Brit.*]

"For me," said she, "I leave her nobler state,
"Happy to live and share her poet's fate."
He saw each day at his father's frugal board,
With simple fare by cautious prudence stored:
Where each indulgence was foreweigh'd with care,
And the grand maxims were to save and spare:
Yet in his walks, his closet, and his bed,
All frugal fares and prudent counsels fled;
And bounteous Fancy, for his glowing mind,
Wrought various scenes, and all of glorious kind:
Slaves of the *ring* and *lamp*,[3] what need of you,
When Fancy's self such magic deeds can do?

Though rapt in visions of no vulgar kind,
To common subjects stoop'd our poet's mind;
And oft when wearied with more ardent flight,
He felt a spur satiric song to write;
A rival burgess his bold Muse attack'd,
And whipp'd severely for a well known fact;
For while he seem'd to all demure and shy,
Our poet gazed at what was passing by;
And e'en his father smiled when playful wit,
From his young bard, some haughty object hit.

From ancient times, the borough where they dwelt
Had mighty contests at elections felt:
Sir Godfrey Ball, 't is true, had held in pay
Electors many for the trying day;
But in such golden chains to bind them all
Required too much for e'en Sir Godfrey Ball.
A member died, and to supply his place
Two heroes enter'd for th' important race;
Sir Godfrey's friend and Earl Fitzdonnel's son,
Lord Frederick Damer, both prepared to run;
And partial numbers saw with vast delight
Their good young lord oppose the proud old knight.

Our poet's father, at a first request,
Gave the young lord his vote and interest;
And what he could our poet, for he stung
The foe by verse satiric, said and sung.
Lord Frederick heard of all this youthful zeal,
And felt as lords upon a canvass feel;
He read the satire, and he saw the use
That such cool insult, and such keen abuse,
Might on the wavering minds of voting men produce;
Then too his praises were in contrast seen,
"A lord as noble as the knight was mean."

"I much rejoice," he cried, "such worth to find;
"To this the world must be no longer blind:
"His glory will descend from sire to son,
"The Burns of English race, the happier Chatterton."
Our poet's mind, now hurried and elate,
Alarm'd the anxious parent for his fate;
Who saw with sorrow, should their friend succeed,
That much discretion would the poet need.

Their friend succeeded, and repaid the zeal
The poet felt, and made opposers feel,
By praise (from lords how soothing and how sweet!)
An invitation to his noble seat.

[3] [See, in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, the History of Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp.]

The father ponder'd, doubtful if the brain
Of his proud boy such honour could sustain;
Pleased with the favours offer'd to a son,
But seeing dangers few so ardent shun.

Thus when they parted, to the youthful breast
The father's fears were by his love impress'd:
"There will you find, my son, the courteous ease
"That must subdue the soul it means to please;
"That soft attention which e'en beauty pays
"To wake our passions, or provoke our praise:
"There all the eye beholds will give delight,
"Where every sense is flatter'd like the sight;
"This is your peril; can you from such scene
"Of splendour part, and feel your mind serene,
"And in the father's humble state resume
"The frugal diet and the narrow room?"
To this the youth with cheerful heart replied,
Pleased with the trial, but as yet untried;
And while professing patience, should he fail,
He suffered hope o'er reason to prevail.

Impatient, by the morning mail conveyed,
The happy guest his promised visit paid;
And now arriving at the Hall, he tried
For air composed, serene, and satisfied;
As he had practised in his room alone,
And there acquired a free and easy tone:
There he had said, "Whatever the degree
"A man obtains, what more than man is he?"
And when arrived—"This room is but a room;
"Can aught we see the steady soul o'ercome?
"Let me in all a manly firmness show,
"Upheld by talents, and their value know."

This reason urged; but it surpassed his skill
To be in act as manly as in will:
When he his Lordship and the Lady saw,
Brave as he was, he felt oppress'd with awe;
And spite of verse, that so much praise had won,
The poet found he was the Bailiff's son.

But dinner came, and the succeeding hours
Fix'd his weak nerves, and raised his failing powers;
Praised and assured, he ventured once or twice
On some remark, and bravely broke the ice;
So that, at night, reflecting on his words,
He found, in time, he might converse with lords.

Now was the Sister of his Patron seen—
A lovely creature, with majestic mien;
Who, softly smiling, while she look'd so fair,
Praised the young poet with such friendly air;
Such winning frankness in her looks express'd,
And such attention to her brother's guest;
That so much beauty, join'd with speech so kind,
Raised strong emotions in the poet's mind;
Till reason fail'd his bosom to defend,
From the sweet power of this enchanting friend.—
Rash boy! what hope thy frantic mind invades?
What love confuses, and what pride persuades?
Awake to truth! shouldst thou deluded feed
On hopes so groundless, thou art mad indeed.

What say'st thou, wise one?—"that all powerful Love
"Can fortune's strong impediments remove;

" Nor is it strange that worth should wed to worth,
" The pride of genius with the pride of birth."
While thou art dreaming thus, the Beauty spies
Love in thy tremour, passion in thine eyes;
And with th' amusement pleased, of conquest vain,
She seeks her pleasure, careless of thy pain;
She gives thee praise to humble and confound,
Smiles to ensnare, and flatters thee to wound.

Why has she said that in the lowest state
The noble mind ensures a noble fate?
And why thy daring mind to glory call?—
That thou may'st dare and suffer, soar and fall.
Beauties are tyrants, and if they can reign,
They have no feeling for their subjects' pain:
Their victim's anguish gives their charms applause,
And their chief glory is the woe they cause:
Something of this was felt, in spite of love,
Which hope, in spite of reason, would remove.

Thus lived our youth, with conversation, books,
And Lady Emma's soul-subduing looks:
Lost in delight, astonish'd at his lot,
All prudence banish'd, all advice forgot—
Hopes, fears, and every thought, were fix'd upon
the spot.

'T was autumn yet, and many a day must frown
On Brandon-Hall, ere went my Lord to town;
Meantime the father, who had heard his boy
Lived in a round of luxury and joy,
And justly thinking that the youth was one
Who, meeting danger, was unskill'd to shun;
Knowing his temper, virtue, spirit, zeal,
How prone to hope and trust, believe and feel;
These on the parent's soul their weight impress'd,
And thus he wrote the counsels of his breast:—

" John, thou 'rt a genius; thou hast some
pretence,
" I think, to wit,—but hast thou sterling sense?
" That which, like gold, may through the world
go forth,
" And always pass for what 't is truly worth:
" Whereas this genius, like a bill must take
" Only the value our opinions make.

" Men famed for wit, of dangerous talents vain,
" Treat those of common parts with proud disdain;
" The powers that wisdom would, improving, hide,
" They blaze abroad with inconsid'rate pride;
" While yet but mere probationers for fame,
" They seize the honour they should then disclaim:
" Honour so hurried to the light must fade,
" The lasting laurels flourish in the shade.

" Genius is jealous: I have heard of some
" Who, if, unnoticed, grew perversely dumb;
" Nay, different talents would their envy raise;
" Poets have sicken'd at a dancer's praise;
" And one, the happiest writer of his time,[4]
" Grew pale at hearing Reynolds was sublime;
" That Rutland's Duchess wore a heavenly smile—
" 'And I,' said he, 'neglected all the while!'

" A waspish tribe are these, on gilded wings,
" Humming their lays, and brandishing their
stings:
" And thus they move their friends and foes among,
" Prepared for soothing or satiric song.

" Hear me, my Boy; thou hast a virtuous mind—
" But be thy virtues of the sober kind;
" Be not a Quixote, ever up in arms
" To give the guilty and the great alarms:
" If never heeded, thy attack is vain;
" And if they heed thee, they 'll attack again;
" Then too in striking at that heedless rate,
" Thou in an instant may'st decide thy fate.

" Leave admonition—let the vicar give
" Rules how the nobles of his flock should live;
" Nor take that simple fancy to thy brain,
" That thou canst cure the wicked and the vain.

" Our Pope, they say, once entertain'd the whim,
" Who fear'd not God should be afraid of him;[5]
" But grant they fear'd him, was it further said,
" That he reform'd the hearts he made afraid?
" Did Chartres mend?[6] Ward,[7] Waters,[8] and a score
" Of flagrant felons, with his floggings sore?
" Was Cibber silenced? No; with vigour blest,
" And brazen front, half earnest, half in jest,
" He dared the bard to battle, and was seen
" In all his glory match'd with Pope and spleen;
" Himself he stripp'd, the harder blow to hit,
" Then boldly match'd his ribaldry with wit;
" The poet's conquest truth and time proclaim,
" But yet the battle hurt his peace and fame.[9]

[4] [Goldsmith. "Those who were in any way distinguished excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible."—CROKER's *Boswell*, vol. i. p. 422.]

[5] ["Yes, I am proud; I must be proud to see
Men not afraid of God, afraid of me;
Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
Yet touch'd and shamed by ridicule alone."
POPE, *Epilogue to Satires*.]

[6] [Chartres was a man infamous for all manner of vices. He died in Scotland, in 1731. The populace at his funeral raised a great riot, almost tore the body out of the coffin, and cast dead dogs, &c. into the grave along with it.]

[7] [John Ward, of Hackney. Being convicted of forgery, he was expelled the House of Commons, suffered on the pillory, and afterwards imprisoned. During his imprisonment, his amusement was to give poison to dogs and cats, and see them expire by slower or quicker torments.]

[8] [A dexterous attorney, who, by a diligent attendance on the necessities of others, acquired an immense fortune, and represented the borough of Bridport in parliament. He died in 1745.]

[9] ["Pope, in 1743, published a new edition of the Dunciad, in which he degraded Tibbald from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead. Colley resented the affront in a pamphlet, which, Pope said, 'would be as good as a dose of hartshorn to him;' but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardson relate that he attended his father, the painter, on a visit, when Cibber's pamphlet came into the hands of Pope, who said, 'these things are my diversion.' They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhing with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had that day been the lot of Pope."—JOHNSON.]

" Strive not too much for favour; seem at ease,
" And rather pleased thyself, than bent to please:
" Upon thy lord with decent care attend,
" But not too near; thou canst not be a friend;
" And favourite be not, 't is a dangerous post—
" Is gain'd by labour, and by fortune lost:
" Talents like thine may make a man approved,
" But other talents trusted and beloved.
" Look round, my son, and thou wilt early see
" The kind of man thou art not form'd to be.

" The real favourites of the great are they
" Who to their views and wants attention pay,
" And pay it ever; who, with all their skill,
" Dive to the heart, and learn the secret will;
" If that be vicious, soon can they provide
" The favourite ill, and o'er the soul preside;
" For vice is weakness, and the artful know
" Their power increases as the passions grow;
" If indolent the pupil, hard their task;
" Such minds will ever for amusement ask;
" And great the labour! for a man to choose
" Objects for one whom nothing can amuse;
" For ere those objects can the soul delight,
" They must to joy the soul herself excite;
" Therefore it is, this patient, watchful kind
" With gentle friction stir the drowsy mind:
" Fix'd on their end, with caution they proceed,
" And sometimes give, and sometimes take the lead;
" Will now a hint convey, and then retire,
" And let the spark awake the lingering fire;
" Or seek new joys, and livelier pleasures bring
" To give the jaded sense a quick'ning spring.

" These arts, indeed, my son must not pursue;
" Nor must he quarrel with the tribe that do:
" It is not safe another's crimes to know,
" Nor is it wise our proper worth to show:—
" 'My lord,' you say, 'engaged me for that worth;'—
" True, and preserve it ready to come forth:
" If questioned, fairly answer,—and that done,
" Shrink back, be silent, and thy father's son;
" For they who doubt thy talents scorn thy boast,
" But they who grant them will dislike thee most:
" Observe the prudent; they in silence sit,
" Display no learning, and affect no wit;
" They hazard nothing, nothing they assume,
" But know the useful art of *acting dumb*.
" Yet to their eyes each varying look appears,
" And every word finds entrance at their ears.

" Thou art Religion's advocate—take heed,
" Hurt not the cause, thy pleasure 't is to plead;
" With wine before thee, and with wits beside,
" Do not in strength of reasoning powers confide;
" What seems to thee convincing, certain, plain,
" They will deny, and dare thee to maintain;
" And thus will triumph o'er thy eager youth,
" While thou wilt grieve for so disgracing truth.

" With pain I 've seen, these wrangling wits among,
" Faith's weak defenders, passionate and young;
" Weak thou art not, yet not enough on guard,
" Where wit and humour keep their watch and ward:
" Men gay and noisy will o'erwhelm thy sense,
" Then loudly laugh at truth's and thy expense;
" While the kind ladies will do all they can
" To check their mirth, and cry, '*The good young man!*'

" Prudence, my Boy, forbids thee to commend
" The cause or party of thy noble friend;
" What are his praises worth, who must be known
" To take a Patron's maxims for his own?
" When ladies sing, on in thy presence play,
" Do not, dear John, *in rapture melt* away;
" 'T is not thy part, there will be list'ners round,
" To cry *Divine!* and dote upon the sound;
" Remember, too, that though the poor have ears,
" They take not in the music of the spheres;
" They must not feel the warble and the thrill,
" Or be dissolved in ecstasy at will;
" Beside, 't is freedom in a youth like thee
" To drop his awe, and deal in ecstasy!

" In silent ease, at least in silence, dine,
" Nor one opinion start of food or wine:
" Thou knowest that all the science thou can boast,
" Is of thy father's simple boil'd or roast;
" Nor always these; he sometimes saved his cash,
" By interlineal days of frugal hash:
" Wine hadst thou seldom; wilt thou be so vain
" As to decide on claret or champagne?
" Dost thou from me derive this taste sublime,
" Who order port the dozen at a time?
" When (every glass held precious in our eyes)
" We judged the value by the bottle's size:
" Then never merit for thy praise assume,
" Its worth well knows each servant in the room.

" Hard, Boy, thy task, to steer thy way among
" That servile, supple, shrewd, insidious throng;
" Who look upon thee as of doubtful race,
" An interloper, one who wants a place:
" Freedom with these, let thy free soul condemn,
" Nor with thy heart's concerns associate them.

" Of all be cautious—but be most afraid
" Of the pale charms that grace My Lady's Maid;
" Of those sweet dimples, of that fraudful eye,
" The frequent glance designed for thee to spy;
" The soft bewitching look, the fond bewailing sigh:
" Let others frown and envy; she the while
" (Insidious syren!) will demurely smile;
" And for her gentle purpose, every day
" Inquire thy wants, and meet thee in thy way;
" She has her blandishments, and, though so weak,
" Her person pleases, and her actions speak:
" At first her folly may her aim defeat;
" But kindness shown, at length will kindness meet:
" Have some offended? them will she disdain,
" And, for thy sake, contempt and pity feign;
" She hates the vulgar, she admires to look
" On woods and groves, and dotes upon a book;
" Let her once see thee on her features dwell,
" And hear one sigh, then liberty farewell.

" But, John, remember we cannot maintain
" A poor, proud girl, extravagant and vain.

" Doubt much of friendship: shouldst thou find a friend
" Pleased to advise thee, anxious to commend;
" Should he the praises he has heard report,
" And confidence (in thee confiding) court;
" Much of neglected Patrons should he say,
" And then exclaim—' How long must merit stay!'
" Then show how high thy modest hopes may stretch,
" And point to stations far beyond thy reach;—
" Let such designer, by thy conduct, see
" (Civil and cool) he makes no dupe of thee;
" And he will quit thee, as a man too wise
" For him to ruin first, and then despise.

" Such are thy dangers:—yet, if thou canst steer
" Past all the perils, all the quicksands clear,
" Then may'st thou profit; but if storms prevail,
" If foes beset thee, if thy spirits fail,—
" No more of winds or waters be the sport,
" But in thy father's mansion find a port."

Our poet read.—" It is in truth," said he,
" Correct in part, but what is *this* to me?
" I love a foolish Abigail! in base
" And sordid office! fear not such disgrace:
" Am I so blind?" " Or thou wouldst surely see
" That lady's fall, if she should stoop to thee!"
" The cases differ." " True! for what surprise
" Could from thy marriage with the maid arise?
" But through the island would the shame be spread,
" Should the fair mistress deign with thee to wed."

John saw not this; and many a week had pass'd,
While the vain beauty held her victim fast;
The Noble Friend still condescension show'd,
And, as before, with praises overflow'd;
But his grave Lady took a silent view
Of all that pass'd, and smiling, pitied too.

Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief,
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf;
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roar'd with strong blasts, with mighty showers the floods:
All green was vanish'd, save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.

To public views my Lord must soon attend;
And soon the ladies—would they leave their friend?
The time was fix'd—approach'd—was near—was come;
The trying time that fill'd his soul with gloom:
Thoughtful our poet in the morning rose,
And cried, " One hour my fortune will disclose;
" Terrific hour! from thee have I to date
" Life's loftier views, or my degraded state;
" For now to be what I have been before
" Is so to fall, that I can rise no more."

The morning meal was past; and all around
The mansion rang with each discordant sound;
Haste was in every foot, and every look
The trav'ller's joy for London-journey spoke:
Not so our youth; whose feelings at the noise
Of preparation, had no touch of joys:
He pensive stood, and saw each carriage drawn,
With lackeys mounted, ready on the lawn:
The Ladies came; and John in terror threw
One painful glance, and then his eyes withdrew;
Not with such speed, but he in other eyes
With anguish read—" I pity, but despise—
" Unhappy boy!—presumptuous scribbler!—you,
" To dream such dreams!—be sober, and adieu!"

Then came the Noble Friend—" And will my Lord
" Vouchsafe no comfort; drop no soothing word?
" Yes, he must speak;" he speaks, " My good young friend,
" You know my views; upon my care depend;
" My hearty thanks to your good father pay,
" And be a student.—Harry, drive away."

Stillness reign'd all around; of late so full
The busy scene, deserted now and dull:
Stern is his nature who forbears to feel
Gloom o'er his spirits on such trials steal;
Most keenly felt our poet as he went
From room to room without a fix'd intent;
" And here," he thought, " I was caress'd; admired
" Were here my songs; she smiled, and I aspired.
" The change how grievous!" As he mused, a dame
Busy and peevish to her duties came;
Aside the tables and the chairs she drew,
And sang and mutter'd in the poet's view:—
" This was her fortune; here they leave the poor;
" Enjoy themselves, and think of us no more;
" I had a promise"—here his pride and shame
Urged him to fly from this familiar dame;
He gave one farewell look, and by a coach
Reach'd his own mansion at the night's approach.

His father met him with an anxious air,
Heard his sad tale, and check'd what seem'd despair:
Hope was in him corrected, but alive;
My lord would something for a friend contrive;
His word was pledged: our hero's feverish mind
Admitted this, and half his grief resign'd:
But, when three months had fled, and every day
Drew from the sickening hopes their strength away,
The youth became abstracted, pensive, dull;
He utter'd nothing, though his heart was full;
Teased by inquiring words and anxious looks,
And all forgetful of his Muse and books;
Awake he mourn'd, but in his sleep perceived
A lovely vision that his pain relieved:—
His soul, transported, hail'd the happy seat,
Where once his pleasure was so pure and sweet;
Where joys departed came in blissful view,
Till reason waked, and not a joy he knew.

Questions now vex'd his spirit, most from those
Who are call'd friends, because they are not foes:

" John ? " they would say; he, starting, turn'd around;
" John ! " there was something shocking in the sound:
Ill brook'd he then the pert familiar phrase,
The untaught freedom, and th' inquiring gaze;
Much was his temper touch'd, his spleen provoked,
When ask'd how ladies talk'd, or walk'd, or look'd?
" What said my Lord of politics! how spent
" He there his time? and was he glad he went? "

At length a letter came, both cool and brief,
But still it gave the burthen'd heart relief:
Though not inspired by lofty hopes, the youth
Placed much reliance on Lord Frederick's truth;
Summon'd to town, he thought the visit one
Where something fair and friendly would be done;
Although he judged not, as before his fall,
When all was love and promise at the Hall.

Arrived in town, he early sought to know
The fate such dubious friendship would bestow;
At a tall building trembling he appear'd,
And his low rap was indistinctly heard;
A well-known servant came—" Awhile," said he,
" Be pleased to wait; my Lord has company."

Alone our hero sat; the news in hand,
Which though he read, he could not understand:
Cold was the day; in days so cold as these
There needs a fire, where minds and bodies freeze;
The vast and echoing room, the polish'd grate,
The crimson chairs, the sideboard with its plate;
The splendid sofa, which, though made for rest,
He then had thought it freedom to have press'd;
The shining tables, curiously inlaid,
Were all in comfortless proud style display'd;
And to the troubled feelings terror gave,
That made the once-dear friend the sick'ning slave.

" Was he forgotten? " Thrice upon his ear
Struck the loud clock, yet no relief was near:
Each rattling carriage, and each thundering stroke
On the loud door, the dream of fancy broke;
Oft as a servant chanced the way to come,
" Brings he a message? " no! he pass'd the room:
At length 't is certain; " Sir, you will attend
" At twelve on Thursday! " Thus the day had end.

Vex'd by these tedious hours of needless pain,
John left the noble mansion with disdain;
For there was something in that still, cold place,
That seem'd to threaten and portend disgrace.

Punctual again the modest rap declared
The youth attended; then was all prepared:
For the same servant, by his lord's command,
A paper offer'd to his trembling hand:
" No more! " he cried: " disdains he to afford
" One kind expression, one consoling word? "

With troubled spirit he began to read
That " In the Church my lord could not succeed; "
Who had " to peers of either kind applied,
" And was with dignity and grace denied;
" While his own livings were by men possess'd,
" Not likely in their chancels yet to rest;
" And therefore, all things weigh'd (as he, my lord,
" Had done maturely, and he pledged his word),
" Wisdom it seem'd for John to turn his view
" To busier scenes, and bid the Church adieu! "

Here grieved the youth: he felt his father's pride
Must with his own be shock'd and mortified;
But, when he found his future comforts placed
Where he, alas! conceived himself disgraced—
In some appointment on the London quays,
He bade farewell to honour and to ease;
His spirit fell, and from that hour assured
How vain his dreams, he suffer'd and was cured.

Our Poet hurried on, with wish to fly
From all mankind, to be conceal'd, and die.
Alas! what hopes, what high romantic views
Did that one visit to the soul infuse,
Which, cherish'd with such love, 't was worse than death to lose!
Still he would strive, though painful was the strife,
To walk in this appointed road of life;
On these low duties duteous he would wait,
And patient bear the anguish of his fate.
Thanks to the Patron, but of coldest kind,
Express'd the sadness of the Poet's mind;
Whose heavy hours were pass'd with busy men,
In the dull practice of th' official pen;
Who to Superiors must in time impart
(The custom this) his progress in their art:
But, so had grief on his perception wrought,
That all unheeded were the duties taught;
No answers gave he when his trial came,
Silent he stood, but suffering without shame;
And they observed that words severe or kind
Made no impression on his wounded mind:
For all perceived from whence his failure rose,
Some grief whose cause he deign'd not to disclose.
A soul averse from scenes and works so new,
Fear ever shrinking from the vulgar crew;
Distaste for each mechanic law and rule,
Thoughts of past honour and a patron cool;
A grieving parent, and a feeling mind,
Timid and ardent, tender and refined:
These all with mighty force the youth assail'd,
Till his soul fainted, and his reason fail'd:
When this was known, and some debate arose,
How they who saw it should the fact disclose,
He found their purpose, and in terror fled
From unseen kindness, with mistaken dread.

Meantime the parent was distress'd to find
His son no longer for a priest design'd;
But still he gain'd some comfort by the news
Of John's promotion, though with humbler views;
For he conceived that in no distant time
The boy would learn to scramble and to climb;
He little thought his son, his hope and pride,
His favour'd boy, was now a home denied:
Yes! while the parent was intent to trace
How men in office climb from place to place,
By day, by night, o'er moor, and heath, and hill,
Roved the sad youth, with ever-changing will,
Of every aid bereft, exposed to every ill.

Thus as he sat, absorb'd in all the care
And all the hope that anxious fathers share,

A friend abruptly to his presence brought,
With trembling hand, the subject of his thought;
Whom he had found afflicted and subdued
By hunger, sorrow, cold, and solitude.

Silent he enter'd the forgotten room,
As ghostly forms may be conceived to come;
With sorrow-shrunken face and hair upright,
He look'd dismay, neglect, despair, affright;
But, dead to comfort, and on misery thrown,
His parent's loss he felt not, nor his own.

The good man, struck with horror, cried aloud,
And drew around him an astonish'd crowd;
The sons and servants to the father ran,
To share the feelings of the griev'd old man.

"Our brother, speak!" they all exclaim'd; "explain
"Thy grief, thy suffering:"—but they ask'd in vain:
The friend told all he knew; and all was known,
Save the sad causes whence the ills had grown;
But, if obscure the cause, they all agreed
From rest and kindness must the cure proceed:
And he was cured; for quiet, love, and care,
Strove with the gloom, and broke on the despair;
Yet slow their progress, and, as vapours move
Dense and reluctant from the wintry grove;
All is confusion, till the morning light
Gives the dim scene obscurely to the sight;
More and yet more defined the trunks appear,
Till the wild prospect stands distinct and clear;—
So the dark mind of our young poet grew
Clear and sedate; the dreadful mist withdrew;
And he resembled that bleak wintry scene,
Sad, though unclouded; dismal, though serene.

At times he utter'd, "What a dream was mine!
"And what a prospect! glorious and divine!
"Oh! in that room, and on that night to see
"Those looks, that sweetness beaming all on me;
"That syren-flattery—and to send me then,
"Hope-raised and soften'd, to those heartless men;
"That dark-brow'd stern Director, pleased to show
"Knowledge of subjects I disdain'd to know;
"Cold and controlling—but 't is gone—'t is past;
"I had my trial, and have peace at last."

Now grew the youth resigned: he bade adieu
To all that hope, to all that fancy drew;
His frame was languid, and the hectic heat
Flush'd on his pallid face, and countless beat
The quick'ning pulse, and faint the limbs that bore
The slender form that soon would breathe no more.

Then hope of holy kind the soul sustain'd
And not a lingering thought of earth remain'd;
Now Heaven had all, and he could smile at Love,
And the wild sallies of his youth reprove;
Then could he dwell upon the tempting days,
The proud aspiring thought, the partial praise;
Victorious now, his worldly views were closed,
And on the bed of death the youth reposed.

The father grieved—but as the poet's heart
Was all unfitted for his earthly part;
As, he conceived, some other haughty fair
Would, had he lived, have led him to despair;
As, with this fear, the silent grave shut out
All feverish hope, and all tormenting doubt;
While the strong faith the pious youth possess'd,
His hope enlivening, gave his sorrows rest;
Soothed by these thoughts, he felt a mournful joy
For his aspiring and devoted boy.

Meantime the news through various channels spread,
The youth, once favour'd with such praise, was dead:
"Emma," the Lady cried, "my words attend,
"Your syren-smiles have kill'd your humble friend;
"The hope you raised can now delude no more,
"Nor charms, that once inspired, can now restore."

Faint was the flush of anger and of shame,
That o'er the cheek of conscious beauty came:
"You censure not," said she, "the sun's bright rays,
"When fools imprudent dare the dangerous gaze;
"And should a stripling look till he were blind,
"You would not justly call the light unkind:
"But is he dead? and am I to suppose
"The power of poison in such looks as those?"
She spoke, and, pointing to the mirror, cast
A pleased gay glance, and curtsied as she pass'd.

My Lord, to whom the poet's fate was told,
Was much affected, for a man so cold:
"Dead!"-said his lordship, "run distracted, mad!
"Upon my soul I 'm sorry for the lad;
"And now, no doubt, th' obliging world will say
"That my harsh usage help'd him on his way:
"What! I suppose, I should have nursed his muse,
"And with champagne have brighten'd up his views;
"Then had he made me famed my whole life long,
"And stunn'd my ears with gratitude and song.
"Still should the father hear that I regret
"Our joint misfortune—Yes! I 'll not forget."

Thus they:—the father to his grave convey'd
The son he loved, and his last duties paid.

"There lies my Boy," he cried, "of care bereft,
"And, Heaven be praised, I 've not a genius left:
"No one among ye, sons! is doomed to live
"On high-raised hopes of what the Great may give;[10]

[10] ["Let every man of letters, who wishes for patronage, read D'Alembert's 'Essay on Living with the Great,' before he enters the house of a patron: and let him always remember the fate of Racine, who, having drawn up, at Madame de Maintenon's secret request, a memorial that strongly painted the distresses of the French nation, the weight of their taxes, and the expenses of the Court, she could not resist the importunity of Louis XIV., but showed him her friend's paper, against whom the king immediately conceived a violent indignation, because a poet should dare to busy himself with politics. Racine had the weakness to take this anger so much to heart, that it brought on a low fever, which hastened his death."—WARTON.]

" None, with exalted views and fortunes mean,
" To die in anguish, or to live in spleen:
" Your pious brother soon escaped the strife
" Of such contention, but it cost his life;
" You then, my sons, upon yourselves depend,
" And in your own exertions find the friend." [11]

TALE VI.

THE FRANK COURTSHIP.

Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make a curtsy, and say, " Father, as it please you;" but for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy, and say, " Father, as it pleases me."—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

He cannot flatter, he!
An honest mind and plain—he must speak truth.
King Lear.

God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another; you jig, you amble, you nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance.—*Hamlet.*

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Am I contemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Much Ado about Nothing.

Grave *Jonas Kindred*, Sybil Kindred's sire,
Was six feet high, and look'd six inches higher;
Erect, morose, determined, solemn, slow,
Who knew the man could never cease to know:
His faithful spouse, when Jonas was not by,
Had a firm presence and a steady eye;
But with her husband dropp'd her look and tone,
And Jonas ruled unquestion'd and alone.

He read, and oft would quote the sacred words,
How pious husbands of their wives were lords;
Sarah called Abraham Lord! and who could be,
So Jonas thought, a greater man than he?
Himself he view'd with undisguised respect,
And never pardon'd freedom or neglect.
They had one daughter, and this favourite child
Had oft the father of his spleen beguiled;
Soothed by attention from her early years,
She gained all wishes by her smiles or tears:
But *Sybil* then was in that playful time,
When contradiction is not held a crime;
When parents yield their children idle praise
For faults corrected in their after days.

Peace in the sober house of Jonas dwelt,
Where each his duty and his station felt:
Yet not that peace some favour'd mortals find,
In equal views and harmony of mind;
Not the soft peace that blesses those who love,
Where all with one consent in union move;
But it was that which one superior will
Commands, by making all inferiors still;
Who bids all murmurs all objections cease,
And with imperious voice announces—Peace!

They were, to wit, a remnant of that crew,
Who, as their foes maintain, their Sovereign slew;
An independent race, precise, correct,
Who ever married in the kindred sect:
No son or daughter of their order wed
A friend to England's king who lost his head;
Cromwell was still their Saint, and when they met,
They mourn'd that Saints[1] were not our rulers yet.

Fix'd were their habits; they arose betimes,
Then pray'd their hour, and sang their party-rhymes:
Their meals were plenteous, regular and plain;
The trade of Jonas brought him constant gain;
Vender of hops and malt, of coals and corn—
And, like his father, he was merchant born:
Neat was their house; each table, chair, and stool,
Stood in its place, or moving moved by rule;
No lively print or picture graced the room;
A plain brown paper lent its decent gloom;
But here the eye, in glancing round, survey'd
A small recess that seem'd for china made;
Such pleasing pictures seem'd this pencill'd ware,
That few would search for nobler objects there—
Yet, turn'd by chosen friends, and there appear'd
His stern, strong features, whom they all revered;
For there in lofty air was seen to stand
The bold Protector of the conquer'd land;
Drawn in that look with which he wept and swore,
Turn'd out the Members, and made fast the door,
Ridding the House of every knave and drone,
Forced, though it grieved his soul, to rule alone.

[11] ['The Patron' contains specimens of very various excellence. The story is that of a young man of humble birth, who shows an early genius for poetry; and having been, with some inconvenience to his parents, provided with a frugal, but regular education, is at last taken notice of by a nobleman in the neighbourhood, who promises to promote him in the church, and invites him to pass an autumn with him at his seat in the country. Here the youth, in spite of the admirable admonitions of his father, is gradually overcome by a taste for elegant enjoyments, and allows himself to fall in love with the enchanting sister of his protector. When the family leave him with indifference, to return to town, he feels the first pang of humiliation and disappointment; and afterwards, when he finds that all his noble friend's fine promises end in obtaining for him a poor drudging place in the Customs, he pines and pines till he falls into insanity; and recovers, only to die prematurely in the arms of his disappointed parents. The history of the poet's progress, the father's warnings, the blandishments of the careless syren by whom he was enchanted, are all excellent. The description of the breaking up of that enchantment cannot fail to strike, if it had no other merit, from its mere truth and accuracy. The humiliation and irritability of the youth on his first return home are also represented with a thorough knowledge of human nature.—Jeffrey.]

[1] This appellation is here used not ironically, nor with malignity; but it is taken merely to designate a morosely devout people, with peculiar austerity of manners.

The stern still smile each friend approving gave,
Then turn'd the view, and all again were grave.[2]

There stood a clock, though small the owner's need,
For habit told when all things should proceed;
Few their amusements, but when friends appear'd,
They with the world's distress their spirits cheer'd;
The nation's guilt, that would not long endure
The reign of men so modest and so pure:
Their town was large, and seldom pass'd a day
But some had fail'd, and others gone astray;
Clerks had absconded, wives eloped, girls flown
To Gretna-Green, or sons rebellious grown;
Quarrels and fires arose;—and it was plain
The times were bad; the Saints had ceased to reign!
A few yet lived, to languish and to mourn
For good old manners never to return.

Jonas had sisters, and of these was one
Who lost a husband and an only son:
Twelve months her sables she in sorrow wore,
And mourn'd so long that she could mourn no more.
Distant from Jonas, and from all her race,
She now resided in a lively place;
There, by the sect unseen, at whist she play'd,
Nor was of churchmen or their church afraid:
If much of this the graver brother heard,
He something censured, but he little fear'd;
He knew her rich and frugal; for the rest,
He felt no care, or, if he felt, suppress'd:
Nor for companion when she ask'd her Niece,
Had he suspicions that disturb'd his peace;
Frugal and rich, these virtues as a charm
Preserved the thoughtful man from all alarm;
An infant yet, she soon would home return,
Nor stay the manners of the world to learn;
Meantime his boys would all his care engross,
And be his comforts if he felt the loss.

The sprightly *Sybil*, pleased and unconfined,
Felt the pure pleasure of the op'ning mind:
All here was gay and cheerful—all at home
Unvaried quiet and unruffled gloom:
There were no changes, and amusements few;—
Here all was varied, wonderful, and new;
There were plain meals, plain dresses, and grave looks—
Here, gay companions and amusing books;
And the young Beauty soon began to taste
The light vocations of the scene she graced.

A man of business feels it as a crime
On calls domestic to consume his time;
Yet this grave man had not so cold a heart,
But with his daughter he was grieved to part:
And he demanded that in every year
The Aunt and Niece should at his house appear.

"Yes! we must go, my child, and by our dress
"A grave conformity of mind express;
"Must sing at meeting, and from cards refrain,
"The more t' enjoy when we return again."

Thus spake the Aunt, and the discerning child
Was pleased to learn how fathers are beguiled.
Her artful part the young dissembler took,
And from the matron caught th' approving look:
When thrice the friends had met, excuse was sent
For more delay, and Jonas was content;
Till a tall maiden by her sire was seen,
In all the bloom and beauty of sixteen;
He gazed admiring;—she, with visage prim,
Glanced an arch look of gravity on him;
For she was gay at heart, but wore disguise,
And stood a vestal in her father's eyes:
Pure, pensive, simple, sad; the damsel's heart,
When Jonas praised, reproved her for the part;
For Sybil, fond of pleasure, gay and light,
Had still a secret bias to the right;
Vain as she was—and flattery made her vain—
Her simulation gave her bosom pain.

Again return'd, the Matron and the Niece
Found the late quiet gave their joy increase;
The aunt infirm, no more her visits paid,
But still with her sojourn'd the favourite maid.
Letters were sent when franks could be procured,
And when they could not, silence was endured;
All were in health, and if they older grew,
It seem'd a fact that none among them knew;
The aunt and niece still led a pleasant life,
And quiet days had Jonas and his wife.

Near him a Widow dwelt of worthy fame,
Like his her manners, and her creed the same;
The wealth her husband left, her care retain'd
For one tall Youth, and widow she remain'd;
His love respectful all her care repaid,
Her wishes watch'd, and her commands obey'd.

Sober he was and grave from early youth,
Mindful of forms, but more intent on truth;
In a light drab he uniformly dress'd,
And look serene th' unruffled mind express'd;
A hat with ample verge his brows o'erspread,
And his brown locks curl'd graceful on his head;
Yet might observers in his speaking eye
Some observation, some acuteness spy;
The friendly thought it keen, the treacherous deem'd it sly;
Yet not a crime could foe or friend detect,
His actions all were, like his speech, correct;
And they who jested on a mine so sound,
Upon his virtues must their laughter found;
Chaste, sober, solemn, and devout they named
Him who was thus, and not of *this* ashamed.

Such were the virtues Jonas found in one
In whom he warmly wish'd to find a son:
Three years had pass'd since he had Sybil seen;
But she was doubtless what she once had been,
Lovely and mild, obedient and discreet;
The pair must love whenever they should meet;
Then ere the widow or her son should choose
Some happier maid, he would explain his views:
Now she, like him, was politic and shrewd,
With strong desire of lawful gain embued;

[2] [Such was the actual consolation of a small knot of Presbyterians in a country town, about sixty years ago.]

To all he said, she bow'd with much respect,
Pleased to comply, yet seeming to reject;
Cool and yet eager, each admired the strength
Of the opponent, and agreed at length:
As a drawn battle shows to each a force,
Powerful as his, he honours it of course;
So in these neighbours, each the power discern'd,
And gave the praise that was to each return'd.

Jonas now ask'd his daughter—and the Aunt,
Though loth to lose her, was obliged to grant:—
But would not Sybil to the matron cling,
And fear to leave the shelter of her wing?
No! in the young there lives a love of change,
And to the easy they prefer the strange!
Then, too, the joys she once pursued with zeal,
From whist and visits sprung, she ceased to feel:
When with the matrons Sybil first sat down,
To cut for partners and to stake her crown,
This to the youthful maid preferment seem'd,
Who thought what woman she was then esteem'd;
But in few years, when she perceived, indeed,
The real woman to the girl succeed,
No longer tricks and honours fill'd her mind,
But other feelings, not so well defined;
She then reluctant grew, and thought it hard
To sit and ponder o'er an ugly card;
Rather the nut-tree shade the nymph preferr'd,
Pleased with the pensive gloom and evening bird;
Thither, from company retired, she took
The silent walk, or read the fav'rite book.

The father's letter, sudden, short, and kind,
Awaked her wonder, and disturb'd her mind;
She found new dreams upon her fancy seize,
Wild roving thoughts and endless reveries:
The parting came;—and when the Aunt perceived
The tears of Sybil, and how much she grieved—
To love for her that tender grief she laid,
That various, soft, contending passions made.

When Sybil rested in her father's arms,
His pride exulted in a daughter's charms;
A maid accomplish'd he was pleased to find,
Nor seem'd the form more lovely than the mind:
But when the fit of pride and fondness fled,
He saw his judgment by his hopes misled;
High were the lady's spirits, far more free
Her mode of speaking than a maid's should be;
Too much, as Jonas thought, she seem'd to know,
And all her knowledge was disposed to show;
"Too gay her dress, like theirs who idly dote
"On a young coxcomb, or a coxcomb's coat;
"In foolish spirits when our friends appear,
"And vainly grave when not a man is near."

Thus Jonas, adding to his sorrow blame,
And terms disdainful to a Sister's name:—
"The sinful wretch has by her arts defiled
"The ductile spirit of my darling child."

"The maid is virtuous," said the dame—Quoth he,
"Let her give proof, by acting virtuously:
"Is it in gaping when the Elders pray?
"In reading nonsense half a summer's day?
"In those mock forms that she delights to trace,
"Or her loud laughs in Hezekiah's face?
"She—O Susannah!—to the world belongs;
"She loves the follies of its idle throngs,
"And reads soft tales of love, and sings love's soft'ning songs.
"But, as our friend is yet delay'd in town,
"We must prepare her till the Youth comes down:
"You shall advise the maiden; I will threat;
"Her fears and hopes may yield us comfort yet."

Now the grave father took the lass aside,
Demanding sternly, "Wilt thou be a bride?"
She answer'd, calling up an air sedate,
"I have not vow'd against the holy state."

"No folly, Sybil," said the parent; "know
"What to their parents virtuous maidens owe:
"A worthy, wealthy youth, whom I approve,
"Must thou prepare to honour and to love.
"Formal to thee his air and dress may seem,
"But the good youth is worthy of esteem:
"Shouldst thou with rudeness treat him; of disdain
"Should he with justice or of slight complain,
"Or of one taunting speech give certain proof,
"Girl! I reject thee from my sober roof."

"My aunt," said Sybil, "will with pride protect
"One whom a father can for this reject;
"Nor shall a formal, rigid, soul-less boy
"My manners alter, or my views destroy!"

Jonas then lifted up his hands on high,
And, utt'ring something 'twixt a groan and sigh,
Left the determined maid, her doubtful mother by.

"Hear me," she said; "incline thy heart, my child,
"And fix thy fancy on a man so mild:
"Thy father, Sybil, never could be moved
"By one who loved him, or by one he loved.
"Union like ours is but a bargain made
"By slave and tyrant—he will be obey'd;
"Then calls the quiet, comfort—but thy Youth
"Is mild by nature, and as frank as truth."

"But will he love?" said Sybil; "I am told
"That these mild creatures are by nature cold."

"Alas!" the matron answer'd, "much I dread
"That dangerous love by which the young are led!
"That love is earthy; you the creature prize,
"And trust your feelings and believe your eyes:
"Can eyes and feelings inward worth descry?
"No! my fair daughter, on our choice rely!
"Your love, like that display'd upon the stage,
"Indulged is folly, and opposed is rage;—
"More prudent love our sober couples show,
"All that to mortal beings, mortals owe;
"All flesh is grass—before you give a heart,
"Remember, Sybil, that in death you part;
"And should your husband die before your love,
"What needless anguish must a widow prove!
"No! my fair child, let all such visions cease;
"Yield but esteem, and only try for peace."

"I must be loved," said Sybil; "I must see
"The man in terrors who aspires to me;

" At my forbidding frown his heart must ache,
" His tongue must falter, and his frame must shake:
" And if I grant him at my feet to kneel,
" What trembling, fearful pleasure must he feel;
" Nay, such the raptures that my smiles inspire,
" That reason's self must for a time retire."

" Alas! for good *Josiah*," said the dame,
" These wicked thoughts would fill his soul with shame;
" He kneel and tremble at a thing of dust!
" He cannot, child:"—the Child replied, " He must."

They ceased: the matron left her with a frown;
So Jonas met her when the Youth came down:
" Behold," said he, " thy future spouse attends;
" Receive him, daughter, as the best of friends;
" Observe, respect him—humble be each word,
" That welcomes home thy husband and thy lord."

Forewarn'd, thought Sybil, with a bitter smile,
I shall prepare my manner and my style.

Ere yet Josiah enter'd on his task,
The father met him—" Deign to wear a mask
" A few dull days, Josiah—but a few—
" It is our duty, and the sex's due;
" I wore it once, and every grateful wife
" Repays it with obedience through her life:
" Have no regard to Sybil's dress, have none
" To her pert language, to her flippant tone;
" Henceforward thou shalt rule unquestion'd and alone;
" And she thy pleasure in thy looks shall seek—
" How she shall dress, and whether she may speak."

A sober smile return'd the Youth, and said,
" Can I cause fear, who am myself afraid?"

Sybil, meantime, sat thoughtful in her room,
And often wonder'd—" Will the creature come?
" Nothing shall tempt, shall force me to bestow
" My hand upon him,—yet I wish to know."

The door unclosed, and she beheld her sire
Lead in the Youth, then hasten to retire;
" Daughter, my friend—my daughter, friend," he cried,
And gave a meaning look, and stepp'd aside:
That look contain'd a mingled threat and prayer,
" Do take him, child—offend him, if you dare."

The couple gazed—were silent, and the maid
Look'd in his face, to make the man afraid;
The man, unmoved, upon the maiden cast
A steady view—so salutation pass'd:
But in this instant Sybil's eye had seen
The tall fair person, and the still staid mien;
The glow that temp'rance o'er the cheek had spread,
Where the soft down half veil'd the purest red;
And the serene deportment that proclaim'd
A heart unspotted, and a life unblamed:
But then with these she saw attire too plain,
The pale brown coat, though worn without a stain;
The formal air, and something of the pride
That indicates the wealth it seems to hide;
And looks that were not, she conceived, exempt
From a proud pity, or a sly contempt.

Josiah's eyes had their employment too,
Engaged and soften'd by so bright a view;
A fair and meaning face, an eye of fire,
That check'd the bold, and made the free retire:
But then with these he mark'd the studied dress
And lofty air, that scorn or pride express;
With that insidious look, that seem'd to hide
In an affected smile the scorn and pride;
And if his mind the virgin's meaning caught,
He saw a foe with treacherous purpose fraught—
Captive the heart to take, and to reject it, caught.

Silent they sat—thought Sybil, that he seeks
Something, no doubt; I wonder if he speaks:
Scarcely she wonder'd, when these accents fell
Slow in her ear—" Fair maiden, art thou well?"
" Art thou physician?" she replied; " my hand,
" My pulse, at least, shall be at thy command."

She said—and saw, surprised, Josiah kneel,
And gave his lips the offer'd pulse to feel;
The rosy colour rising in her cheek,
Seem'd that surprise unmix'd with wrath to speak;
Then sternness she assumed, and—" Doctor, tell;
" Thy words cannot alarm me—am I well?"

" Thou art," said he; " and yet thy dress so light,
" I do conceive, some danger must excite:"
" In whom?" said Sybil, with a look demure:
" In more," said he, " than I expect to cure;—
" I, in thy light luxuriant robe, behold
" Want and excess, abounding and yet cold;
" Here needed, there display'd, in many a wanton fold:
" Both health and beauty, learned authors show,
" From a just medium in our clothing flow."

" Proceed, good doctor; if so great my need,
" What is thy fee? Good doctor! pray proceed."

" Large is my fee, fair lady, but I take
" None till some progress in my cure I make:
" Thou hast disease, fair maiden; thou art vain;
" Within that face sit insult and disdain;
" Thou art enamour'd of thyself; my art
" Can see the naughty malice of thy heart:
" With a strong pleasure would thy bosom move,
" Were I to own thy power, and ask thy love;
" And such thy beauty, damsel, that I might,
" But for thy pride, feel danger in thy sight,
" And lose my present peace in dreams of vain delight."

" And can thy patients," said the nymph, " endure
" Physic like this? and will it work a cure?"

" Such is my hope, fair damsel; thou, I find,
" Hast the true tokens of a noble mind;
" But the world wins thee, Sybil, and thy joys
" Are placed in trifles, fashions, follies, toys;

" Thou hast sought pleasure in the world around,
" That in thine own pure bosom should be found;
" Did all that world admire thee, praise and love,
" Could it the least of nature's pains remove?
" Could it for errors, follies, sins atone,
" Or give thee comfort, thoughtful and alone?
" It has, believe me, maid, no power to charm
" Thy soul from sorrow, or thy flesh from harm:
" Turn then, fair creature, from a world of sin,
" And seek the jewel happiness within."

" Speak'st thou at meeting?" said the nymph; " thy speech
" Is that of mortal very prone to teach;
" But wouldst thou, doctor, from the patient learn
" Thine own disease?—The cure is thy concern."

" Yea, with good will."—" Then know 't is thy complaint,
" That, for a sinner, thou 'rt too much a saint;
" Hast too much show of the sedate and pure,
" And without cause art formal and demure:
" This makes a man unsocial, unpolite;
" Odious when wrong, and insolent if right.
" Thou mayst be good, but why should goodness be
" Wrapt in a garb of such formality?
" Thy person well might please a damsel's eye,
" In decent habit with a scarlet dye;
" But, jest apart—what virtue canst thou trace
" In that broad brim that hides thy sober face?
" Does that long-skirted drab, that over-nice
" And formal clothing, prove a scorn of vice?
" Then for thine accent—what in sound can be
" So void of grace as dull monotony?
" Love has a thousand varied notes to move
" The human heart:—thou mayst not speak of love
" Till thou hast cast thy formal ways aside,
" And those becoming youth and nature tried:
" Not till exterior freedom, spirit, ease,
" Prove it thy study and delight to please;
" Not till these follies meet thy just disdain,
" While yet thy virtues and thy worth remain."

" This is severe!—Oh! maiden, wilt not thou
" Something for habits, manners, modes, allow?"—
" Yes! but allowing much, I much require,
" In my behalf, for manners, modes, attire!"

" True, lovely Sybil; and, this point agreed,
" Let me to those of greater weight proceed:
" Thy father!"—" Nay," she quickly interposed,
" Good doctor, here our conference is closed!"

Then left the Youth, who, lost in his retreat,
Pass'd the good matron on her garden-seat;
His looks were troubled, and his air, once mild
And calm, was hurried:—" My audacious child!"
Exclaim'd the dame, " I read what she has done
" In thy displeasure—Ah! the thoughtless one:

" But yet, Josiah, to my stern good man
" Speak of the maid as mildly as you can:
" Can you not seem to woo a little while
" The daughter's will, the father to beguile?
" So that his wrath in time may wear away;
" Will you preserve our peace, Josiah? say."

" Yes! my good neighbour," said the gentle youth,
" Rely securely on my care and truth;
" And should thy comfort with my efforts cease,
" And only then,—perpetual is thy peace."

The dame had doubts: she well his virtues knew,
His deeds were friendly, and his words were true:
" But to address this vixen is a task
" He is ashamed to take, and I to ask."
Soon as the father from Josiah learn'd
What pass'd with Sybil, he the truth discern'd.
" He loves," the man exclaim'd, " he loves, 't is plain,
" The thoughtless girl, and shall he love in vain?
" She may be stubborn, but she shall be tried,
" Born as she is of wilfulness and pride."

With anger fraught, but willing to persuade,
The wrathful father met the smiling maid:
" Sybil," said he, " I long, and yet I dread
" To know thy conduct—hath Josiah fled?
" And, grieved and fretted by thy scornful air,
" For his lost peace, betaken him to prayer?
" Couldst thou his pure and modest mind distress
" By vile remarks upon his speech, address,
" Attire, and voice?"—" All this I must confess."
" Unhappy child! what labour will it cost
" To win him back!"—" I do not think him lost."
" Courts he then (trifler!) insult and disdain?"—
" No; but from these he courts me to refrain."
" Then hear me, Sybil: should Josiah leave
" Thy father's house?"—" My father's child would grieve."
" That is of grace, and if he come again
" To speak of love?"—" I might from grief refrain."
" Then wilt thou, daughter, our design embrace?"—
" Can I resist it, if it be of grace?"
" Dear child! in three plain words thy mind express:
" Wilt thou have this good youth?"—" Dear father! yes."[3]

[3] [" The Frank Courtship" is rather in the merry vein; and contains even less than Mr. Crabbe's usual moderate allowance of incident. The whole of the story is, that the daughter of a rigid Quaker, having been educated from home, conceives a slight prejudice against the ungallant manners of the sect, and is prepared to be very contemptuous and uncomplying when her father proposes a sober youth of the persuasion for a husband; but is so much struck with the beauty of his person, and the cheerful reasonableness of his deportment, at their first interview, that she instantly yields her consent. There is an excellent description of the father, and the unbending elders of his tribe; and some fine traits of natural coquetry.—JEFFREY.]

TALE VII.

THE WIDOW'S TALE.

Ah me! for aught that I could ever read,
Or ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But either it was different in blood,
Or else misgrafted in respect of years,
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends;
Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it.
Midsummer Night's Dream.

Oh! thou didst then ne'er love so heartily,
If thou rememberest not the slightest folly
That ever love did make thee run into.
As You Like It.

Cry the man mercy! love him, take his offer.
As You Like It.

To Farmer *Moss*, in Langar Vale, came down,
His only Daughter, from her school in town;
A tender, timid maid! who knew not how
To pass a pig-sty, or to face a cow:
Smiling she came, with petty talents graced,
A fair complexion, and a slender waist.

Used to spare meals, disposed in manner pure,
Her father's kitchen she could ill endure:
Where by the steaming beef he hungry sat,
And laid at once a pound upon his plate;
Hot from the field, her eager brother seized
An equal part, and hunger's rage appeased;
The air surcharged with moisture, flagg'd around,
And the offended damsel sigh'd and frown'd;
The swelling fat in lumps conglomerate laid,
And fancy's sickness seized the loathing maid:
But when the men beside their station took,
The maidens with them, and with these the cook;
When one huge wooden bowl before them stood,
Fill'd with huge balls of farinaceous food;
With bacon, mass saline, where never lean
Beneath the brown and bristly rind was seen;
When from a single horn the party drew
Their copious draughts of heavy ale and new;
When the coarse cloth she saw, with many a stain
Soil'd by rude hinds who cut and came again—
She could not breathe; but with a heavy sigh,
Rein'd the fair neck, and shut th' offended eye;
She minced the sanguine flesh in frustums fine,
And wonder'd much to see the creatures dine;
When she resolved her father's heart to move,
If hearts of farmers were alive to love.

She now entreated by herself to sit
In the small parlour, if papa thought fit,
And there to dine, to read, to work alone:—
"No!" said the Farmer, in an angry tone;
"These are your school-taught airs; your mother's pride
"Would send you there; but I am now your guide.—
"Arise betimes, our early meal prepare,
"And, this despatch'd, let business be your care;
"Look to the lasses, let there not be one
"Who lacks attention, till her tasks be done;
"In every household work your portion take,
"And what you make not, see that others make:
"At leisure times attend the wheel, and see
"The whit'ning web besprinkled on the lea;
"When thus employ'd, should our young neighbours view,
"A useful lass,—you may have more to do."

Dreadful were these commands; but worse than these
The parting hint—a Farmer could not please:
'T is true she had without abhorrence seen
Young *Harry Carr*, when he was smart and clean:
But, to be married—be a farmer's wife—
A slave! a drudge!—she could not, for her life.

With smimming eyes the fretful nymph withdrew,
And, deeply sighing, to her chamber flew;
There on her knees, to Heaven she grieving pray'd
For change of prospect to a tortured maid.

Harry, a youth whose late-departed sire
Had left him all industrious men require,
Saw the pale Beauty,—and her shape and air
Engaged him much, and yet he must forbear:
"For my small farm what can the damsel do?"
He said,—then stopp'd to take another view:
"Pity so sweet a lass will nothing learn
"Of household cares,—for what can beauty earn
"By those small arts which they at school attain,
"That keep them useless, and yet make them vain?

This luckless Damsel look'd the village round,
To find a friend, and one was quickly found:
A pensive Widow, whose mild air and dress
Pleased the sad nymph, who wish'd her soul's distress
To one so seeming kind, confiding, to confess.

"What Lady that?" the anxious lass inquired,
Who then beheld the one she most admired:
"Here," said the Brother, "are no ladies seen—
"That is a widow dwelling on the Green;
"A dainty dame, who can but barely live
"On her poor pittance, yet contrives to give;
"She happier days has known, but seems at ease,
"And you may call her lady if you please:
"But if you wish, good sister, to improve,
"You shall see twenty better worth your love."

These *Nancy* met; but, spite of all they taught,
This useless Widow was the one she sought:
The father growl'd; but said he knew no harm
In such connexion that could give alarm;
"And if we thwart the trifler in her course,
"'T is odds against us she will take a worse."

Then met the friends; the Widow heard the sigh
That ask'd at once compassion and reply:—
"Would you, my child, converse with one so poor,
"Yours were the kindness—yonder is my door:
"And, save the time that we in public pray,
"From that poor cottage I but rarely stray."

There went the nymph, and made her strong complaints,
Painting her woe as injured feeling paints.

"Oh, dearest friend! do think how one must feel,
"Shock'd all day long, and sicken'd every meal;
"Could you behold our kitchen (and to you
"A scene so shocking must indeed be new),
"A mind like yours, with true refinement graced,
"Would let no vulgar scenes pollute your taste:
"And yet, in truth, from such a polish'd mind
"All base ideas must resistance find,
"And sordid pictures from the fancy pass,
"As the breath startles from the polish'd glass.

"Here you enjoy a sweet romantic scene,
"Without so pleasant, and within so clean;
"These twining jess'mines, what delicious gloom
"And soothing fragrance yield they to the room!
"What lovely garden! there you oft retire,
"And tales of woe and tenderness admire:
"In that neat case your books, in order placed,
"Soothe the full soul, and charm the cultur'd taste;
"And thus, while all about you wears a charm,
"How must you scorn the Farmer and the Farm!"

The Widow smiled, and "Know you not," said she,
"How much these farmers scorn or pity me;
"Who see what you admire, and laugh at all they see?
"True, their opinion alters not my fate,
"By falsely judging of an humble state:
"This garden you with such delight behold,
"Tempts not a feeble dame who dreads the cold;
"These plants which please so well your livelier sense,
"To mine but little of their sweets dispense:
"Books soon are painful to my failing sight,
"And oftener read from duty than delight;
"(Yet let me own, that I can sometimes find
"Both joy and duty in the act combined;)
"But view me rightly, you will see no more
"Than a poor female, willing to be poor;
"Happy indeed, but not in books nor flowers,
"Not in fair dreams, indulged in earlier hours,
"Of never-tasted joys;—such visions shun,
"My youthful friend, nor scorn the Farmer's Son."

"Nay," said the Damsel, nothing pleased to see
A friend's advice could like a Father's be,
"Bless'd in your cottage, you must surely smile
"At those who live in our detested style:
"To my Lucinda's sympathising heart
"Could I my prospects and my griefs impart,
"She would console me; but I dare not show
"Ills that would wound her tender soul to know:
"And I confess, it shocks my pride to tell
"The secrets of the prison where I dwell;
"For that dear maiden would be shock'd to feel
"The secrets I should shudder to reveal;
"When told her friend was by a parent ask'd,
"'Fed you the swine?'—Good heaven! how I am task'd!—
"What! can you smile? Ah! smile not at the grief
"That woos your pity and demands relief."

"Trifles, my love: you take a false alarm;
"Think, I beseech you, better of the Farm:
"Duties in every state demand your care,
"And light are those that will require it there.
"Fix on the Youth a favouring eye, and these,
"To him pertaining, or as his, will please."

"What words," the Lass replied, "offend my ear!
"Try you my patience? Can you be sincere?
"And am I told a willing hand to give
"To a rude farmer, and with rustics live?
"For other fate was yours;—some gentle youth
"Admir'd your beauty, and avow'd his truth;
"The power of love prevail'd, and freely both
"Gave the fond heart, and pledged the binding oath;
"And then the rival's plot, the parent's power,
"And jealous fears, drew on the happy hour:
"Ah! let not memory lose the blissful view,
"But fairly show what love has done for you."

"Agreed, my daughter; what my heart has known
"Of Love's strange power, shall be with frankness shown:
"But let me warn you, that experience finds
"Few of the scenes that lively hope designs."

"Mysterious all," said Nancy; "you, I know,
"Have suffer'd much; now deign the grief to show;—
"I am your friend, and so prepare my heart
"In all your sorrows to receive a part."

The Widow answer'd: "I had once, like you,
"Such thoughts of love; no dream is more untrue;
"You judge it fated, and decreed to dwell
"In youthful hearts, which nothing can expel,
"A passion doom'd to reign, and irresistible.
"The struggling mind, when once subdued, in vain
"Rejects the fury or defies the pain;
"The strongest reason fails the flame t' allay,
"And resolution droops and faints away:
"Hence, when the destined lovers meet, they prove
"At once the force of this all-powerful love;
"Each from that period feels the mutual smart,
"Nor seeks to cure it—heart is changed for heart;
"Nor is there peace till they delighted stand,
"And, at the altar—hand is join'd to hand.

"Alas! my child, there are who, dreaming so,
"Waste their fresh youth, and waking feel the woe.
"There is no spirit sent the heart to move
"With such prevailing and alarming love;
"Passion to reason will submit—or why
"Should wealthy maids the poorest swains deny?
"Or how could classes and degrees create
"The slightest bar to such resistless fate?
"Yet high and low, you see, forbear to mix;
"No beggars' eyes the heart of kings transfix;
"And who but am'rous peers or nobles sigh,
"When titled beauties pass triumphant by?

" For reason wakes, proud wishes to reprove;
" You cannot hope, and therefore dare not love;
" All would be safe, did we at first inquire—
" 'Does reason sanction what our hearts desire?'
" But quitting precept, let example show
" What joys from Love uncheck'd by prudence flow.

" A Youth my father in his office placed,
" Of humble fortune, but with sense and taste;
" But he was thin and pale, had downcast looks:
" He studied much, and pored upon his books:
" Confused he was when seen, and, when he saw
" Me or my sisters, would in haste withdraw;
" And had this youth departed with the year,
" His loss had cost us neither sigh nor tear.

" But with my father still the youth remain'd,
" And more reward and kinder notice gain'd:
" He often, reading, to the garden stray'd,
" Where I by books or musing was delay'd;
" This to discourse in summer evenings led,
" Of these same evenings, or of what we read:
" On such occasions we were much alone;
" But, save the look, the manner, and the tone,
" (These might have meaning,) all that we discuss'd
" We could with pleasure to a parent trust.

" At length 't was friendship—and my Friend and I
" Said we were happy, and began to sigh;
" My sisters first, and then my father, found
" That we were wandering o'er enchanted ground:
" But he had troubles in his own affairs,
" And would not bear addition to his cares:
" With pity moved, yet angry, 'Child,' said he,
" 'Will you embrace contempt and beggary?
" 'Can you endure to see each other cursed
" 'By want, of every human woe the worst?
" 'Warring for ever with distress, in dread
" 'Either of begging or of wanting bread;
" 'While poverty, with unrelenting force,
" 'Will your own offspring from your love divorce;
" 'They, through your folly, must be doom'd to pine,
" 'And you deplore your passion, or resign;
" 'For if it die, what good will then remain?
" 'And if it live, it doubles every pain.' "

" But you were true," exclaim'd the Lass, " and fled
" The tyrant's power who fill'd your soul with dread?"
" But," said the smiling Friend, " he fill'd my mouth with bread:
" And in what other place that bread to gain
" We long consider'd, and we sought in vain:
" This was my twentieth year,—at thirty-five
" Our hope was fainter, yet our love alive;
" So many years in anxious doubt had pass'd."
" Then," said the Damsel, " you were bless'd at last?"
A smile again adorn'd the Widow's face,
But soon a starting tear usurp'd its place.

" Slow pass'd the heavy years, and each had more
" Pains and vexations than the years before.
" My father fail'd; his family was rent,
" And to new states his grieving daughters sent:
" Each to more thriving kindred found a way,
" Guests without welcome,—servants without pay;
" Our parting hour was grievous; still I feel
" The sad, sweet converse at our final meal;
" Our father then reveal'd his former fears,
" Cause of his sternness, and then join'd our tears:
" Kindly he strove our feelings to repress,
" But died, and left us heirs to his distress.
" The rich, as humble friends, my sisters chose;
" I with a wealthy widow sought repose;
" Who with a chilling frown her friend received,
" Bade me rejoice, and wonder'd that I grieved:
" In vain my anxious lover tried his skill
" To rise in life, he was dependent still:
" We met in grief, nor can I paint the fears
" Of these unhappy, troubled, trying years:
" Our dying hopes and stronger fears between,
" We felt no season peaceful or serene;
" Our fleeting joys, like meteors in the night,
" Shone on our gloom with inauspicious light;
" And then domestic sorrows, till the mind,
" Worn with distresses, to despair inclined;
" Add too the ill that from the passion flows,
" When its contemptuous frown the world bestows,
" The peevish spirit caused by long delay,
" When, being gloomy, we contemn the gay,
" When, being wretched, we incline to hate
" And censure others in a happier state;
" Yet loving still, and still compell'd to move
" In the sad labyrinth of lingering love:
" While you, exempt from want, despair, alarm,
" May wed—oh! take the Farmer and the Farm."

" Nay," said the Nymph, " joy smiled on you at last?"
" Smiled for a moment," she replied, " and pass'd:
" My lover still the same dull means pursued,
" Assistant call'd, but kept in servitude;
" His spirits wearied in the prime of life,
" By fears and wishes in eternal strife;
" At length he urged impatient—'Now consent;
" 'With thee united, Fortune may relent.'
" I paused, consenting; but a Friend arose,
" Pleased a fair view, though distant, to disclose;
" From the rough ocean we beheld a gleam
" Of joy, as transient as the joys we dream;
" By lying hopes deceived, my friend retired,
" And sail'd — was wounded — reach'd us — and expired!
" You shall behold his grave; and when I die,
" There—but 't is folly—I request to lie."

" Thus," said the Lass, " to joy you bade adieu!
" But how a widow?—that cannot be true:
" Or was it force, in some unhappy hour,
" That placed you, grieving, in a tyrant's power?"

" Force, my young friend, when forty years are fled,
" Is what a woman seldom has to dread;
" She needs no brazen locks nor guarding walls,
" And seldom comes a lover though she calls:
" Yet, moved by fancy, one approved my face,
" Though time and tears had wrought it much disgrace.

"The man I married was sedate and meek,
"And spoke of love as men in earnest speak;
"Poor as I was, he ceaseless sought, for years,
"A heart in sorrow and a face in tears:
"That heart I gave not; and 't was long before
"I gave attention, and then nothing more:
"But in my breast some grateful feeling rose,
"For one whose love so sad a subject chose;
"Till long delaying, fearing to repent,
"But grateful still, I gave a cold assent.

"Thus we were wed; no fault had I to find,
"And he but one: my heart could not be kind;
"Alas! of every early hope bereft,
"There was no fondness in my bosom left;
"So had I told him, but had told in vain,
"He lived but to indulge me and complain:
"His was this cottage; he inclosed this ground,
"And planted all these blooming shrubs around;
"He to my room these curious trifles brought,
"And with assiduous love my pleasure sought;
"He lived to please me, and I ofttimes strove,
"Smiling, to thank his unrequited love:
"'Teach me,' he cried, 'that pensive mind to ease,
"'For all my pleasure is the hope to please.'

"Serene, though heavy, were the days we spent,
"Yet kind each word, and gen'rous each intent;
"But his dejection lessen'd every day,
"And to a placid kindness died away:
"In tranquil ease we pass'd our latter years,
"By griefs untroubled, unassail'd by fears.

"Let not romantic views your bosom sway;
"Yield to your duties, and their call obey:
"Fly not a Youth, frank, honest, and sincere;
"Observe his merits, and his passion hear!
"'T is true, no hero, but a farmer, sues—
"Slow in his speech, but worthy in his views;
"With him you cannot that affliction prove,
"That rends the bosom of the poor, in love:
"Health, comfort, competence, and cheerful days,
"Your friends' approval, and your father's praise,
"Will crown the deed, and you escape *their* fate
"Who plan so wildly, and are wise too late."

The Damsel heard; at first th' advice was strange,
Yet wrought a happy, nay, a speedy change:
"I have no care," she said, when next they met,
"But one may wonder, he is silent yet;
"He looks around him with his usual stare,
"And utters nothing—not that I shall care."

This pettish humour pleased th' experienced Friend—
None need despair, whose silence can offend;
"Should I," resumed the thoughtful Lass, "consent
"To hear the man, the man may now repent:
"Think you my sighs shall call him from the plough,
"Or give one hint, that 'You may woo me now?'"

"Persist, my love," replied the Friend, "and gain
"A parent's praise, *that* cannot be in vain."

The father saw the change, but not the cause,
And gave the alter'd maid his fond applause:
The coarser manners she in part removed,
In part endured, improving and improved;
She spoke of household works, she rose betimes,
And said neglect and indolence were crimes;
The various duties of their life she weigh'd,
And strict attention to her dairy paid;
The names of servants now familiar grew,
And fair Lucinda's from her mind withdrew;
As prudent travellers for their ease assume
Their modes and language to whose lands they come;
So to the Farmer this fair Lass inclined,
Gave to the business of the Farm her mind;
To useful arts she turn'd her hand and eye;
And by her manners told him—"You may try."

Th' observing Lover more attention paid,
With growing pleasure, to the alter'd maid;
He fear'd to lose her, and began to see
That a slim beauty might a helpmate be:
'Twixt hope and fear he now the Lass address'd,
And in his Sunday robe his love express'd:
She felt no chilling dread, no thrilling joy,
Nor was too quickly kind, too slowly coy;
But still she lent an unreluctant ear
To all the rural business of the year;
Till love's strong hopes endured no more delay,
And Harry ask'd, and Nancy named the day.

"A happy change! my Boy," the father cried:
"How lost your sister all her school-day pride?"
The Youth replied, "It is the Widow's deed;
"The cure is perfect, and was wrought with speed."
"And comes there, Boy, this benefit of books,
"Of that smart dress, and of those dainty looks?
"We must be kind—some offerings from the Farm
"To the White Cot will speak our feelings warm;
"Will show that people, when they know the fact,
"Where they have judged severely, can retract.
"Oft have I smiled, when I beheld her pass
"With cautious step, as if she hurt the grass;
"Where, if a snail's retreat she chanced to storm,
"She look'd as begging pardon of the worm;
"And what, said I, still laughing at the view,
"Have these weak creatures in the world to do?
"But some are made for action, some to speak;
"And, while she looks so pitiful and meek,
"Her words are weighty, though her nerves are weak."

Soon told the village-bells the rite was done,
That join'd the school-bred Miss and Farmer's Son;

Her former habits some slight scandal raised,
But real worth was soon perceived and praised;
She, her neat taste imparted to the Farm,
And he, th' improving skill and vigorous arm.[1]

TALE VIII.

THE MOTHER.

What though you have beauty,
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
As You Like It.

I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed.
As You Like It.

Wilt thou love such a woman? What! to make thee an instrument, and play false strains upon thee!—Not to be endured.—*As You Like It.*

Your son,
As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know
Her estimation hence. *All's Well that Ends Well.*

Be this sweet Helen's knell;
He left a wife whose words all ears took captive,
Whose dear perfections hearts that scorn'd to serve
Humbly call'd Mistress. *All's Well that Ends Well.*

THERE was a worthy, but a simple Pair,
Who nursed a Daughter, fairest of the fair:
Sons they had lost, and she alone remain'd,
Heir to the kindness they had all obtain'd;
Heir to the fortune they design'd for all,
Nor had th' allotted portion then been small;
But now, by fate enrich'd with beauty rare,
They watch'd their treasure with peculiar care:
The fairest features they could early trace,
And, blind with love, saw merit in her face—
Saw virtue, wisdom, dignity, and grace;
And *Dorothea*, from her infant years,
Gain'd all her wishes from their pride or fears;
She wrote a billet, and a novel read,
And with her fame her vanity was fed;
Each word, each look, each action was a cause
For flattering wonder and for fond applause;
She rode or danced, and ever glanced around,
Seeking for praise, and smiling when she found.
The yielding pair to her petitions gave
An humble friend to be a civil slave,
Who for a poor support herself resign'd
To the base toil of a dependent mind:
By nature cold, our Heiress stoop'd to art,
To gain the credit of a tender heart.
Hence at her door must suppliant paupers stand,
To bless the bounty of her beauteous hand:

And now, her education all complete,
She talk'd of virtuous love and union sweet;
She was indeed by no soft passion moved,
But wish'd, with all her soul, to be beloved.
Here, on the favour'd beauty Fortune smiled;
Her chosen Husband was a man so mild,
So humbly temper'd, so intent to please,
It quite distress'd her to remain at ease,
Without a cause to sigh, without pretence to tease:
She tried his patience in a thousand modes,
And tired it not upon the roughest roads.
Pleasure she sought, and, disappointed, sigh'd
For joys, she said, "to her alone denied;"
And she was "sure her parents, if alive,
"Would many comforts for their child contrive:"
The gentle Husband bade her name him one;
"No—that," she answered, "should for her be done;
"How could she say what pleasures were around?
"But she was certain many might be found."
"Would she some seaport, Weymouth, Scarborough, grace?"—
"He knew she hated every watering-place."
"The town?"—"What! now 't was empty, joyless, dull?"
"In winter?"—"No; she liked it worse when full."
She talk'd of building—"Would she plan a room?"—
"No! she could live, as he desired, in gloom."
"Call then our friends and neighbours."—"He might call,
"And they might come and fill his ugly hall;
"A noisy vulgar set, he knew she scorn'd them all."
"Then might their two dear girls the time employ,
"And their improvement yield a solid joy."—
"Solid indeed! and heavy—oh! the bliss
"Of teaching letters to a lisping miss!"
"My dear, my gentle Dorothea, say,
"Can I oblige you?"—"You may go away."

Twelve heavy years this patient soul sustain'd
This wasp's attacks, and then her praise obtain'd,
Graved on a marble tomb, where he at peace remain'd.

Two daughters wept their loss; the one a child
With a plain face, strong sense, and temper mild,
Who keenly felt the Mother's angry taunt,
"Thou art the image of thy pious Aunt:"
Long time had *Lucy* wept her slighted face,
And then began to smile at her disgrace.
Her father's sister, who the world had seen
Near sixty years when Lucy saw sixteen,
Begg'd the plain girl: the gracious Mother smiled,
And freely gave her grieved but passive child;
And with her elder-born, the beauty bless'd,
This parent rested, if such minds can rest:
No miss her waxen babe could so admire,
Nurse with such care, or with such pride attire;

[1] ["'The Widow's Tale' is rather of the facetious order. It contains the history of a farmer's daughter, who comes home from boarding-school a great deal too fine to tolerate the gross habits, or submit to the filthy drudgery, of her father's house; but is induced, by the warning history and sensible exhortations of a neighbouring widow, in whom she expected to find a sentimental companion, to reconcile herself to all those abominations, and marry a jolly young farmer in the neighbourhood. The account of her horrors, on first coming down, is in Mr. Crabbe's best style of Dutch painting—a little coarse, and needlessly minute, but perfectly true, and marvellously coloured."—JEFFREY.]

They were companions meet, with equal mind,
Bless'd with one love, and to one point inclined;
Beauty to keep, adorn, increase, and guard,
Was their sole care, and had its full reward:
In rising splendour with the one it reign'd,
And in the other was by care sustain'd,
The daughter's charms increased, the parent's yet remain'd.

Leave we these ladies to their daily care,
To see how meekness and discretion fare:—
A village maid, unvex'd by want or love,
Could not with more delight than Lucy move;
The village lark, high mounted in the spring,
Could not with purer joy than Lucy sing;
Her cares all light, her pleasures all sincere,
Her duty joy, and her companion dear;
In tender friendship and in true respect
Lived Aunt and Niece, no flattery, no neglect—
They read, walk'd, visited—together pray'd,
Together slept the matron and the maid:
There was such goodness, such pure nature seen
In Lucy's looks, a manner so serene;
Such harmony in motion, speech, and air,
That without fairness she was more than fair,
Had more than beauty in each speaking grace,
That lent their cloudless glory to the face;
Where mild good sense in placid looks were shown,
And felt in every bosom but her own.
The one presiding feature in her mind
Was the pure meekness of a will resign'd;
A tender spirit, freed from all pretence
Of wit, and pleased in mild benevolence;
Bless'd in protecting fondness she reposed,
With every wish indulged though undisclosed;
But Love, like zephyr on the limpid lake,
Was now the bosom of the maid to shake,
And in that gentle mind a gentle strife to make.

Among their chosen friends, a favour'd few
The aunt and niece a youthful Rector knew;
Who, though a younger brother, might address
A younger sister, fearless of success;
His friends, a lofty race, their native pride
At first display'd, and their assent denied:
But, pleased such virtues and such love to trace,
They own'd she would adorn the loftiest race.
The Aunt, a mother's caution to supply,
Had watch'd the youthful priest with jealous eye;
And, anxious for her charge, had view'd unseen
The cautious life that keeps the conscience clean:
In all she found him all she wish'd to find,
With slight exception of a lofty mind:
A certain manner that express'd desire
To be received as brother to the 'Squire.
Lucy's meek eye had beam'd with many a tear,
Lucy's soft heart had beat with many a fear,
Before he told (although his looks, she thought,
Had oft confess'd) that he her favour sought;
But when he kneel'd, (she wish'd him not to kneel,)
And spoke the fears and hopes that lovers feel;
When too the prudent aunt herself confess'd
Her wishes on the gentle youth would rest;
The maiden's eye with tender passion beam'd,
She dwelt with fondness on the life she schemed;
The household cares, the soft and lasting ties
Of love, with all his binding charities;
Their village taught, consoled, assisted, fed,
Till the young zealot tears of pleasure shed.

But would her Mother? Ah! she fear'd it wrong
To have indulged these forward hopes so long;
Her mother loved, but was not used to grant
Favours so freely as her gentle aunt.—
Her gentle aunt, with smiles that angels wear,
Dispell'd her Lucy's apprehensive tear:
Her prudent foresight the request had made
To one whom none could govern, few persuade;
She doubted much if one in earnest woo'd
A girl with not a single charm endued;
The Sister's nobler views she then declared,
And what small sum for Lucy could be spared;
"If more than this the foolish priest requires,
"Tell him," she wrote, "to check his vain desires."
At length, with many a cold expression mix'd,
With many a sneer on girls so fondly fix'd,
There came a promise—should they not repent,
But take with grateful minds the portion meant,
And wait the Sister's day—the Mother might consent.

And here, might pitying hope o'er truth prevail,
Or love o'er fortune, we would end our tale;
For who more bless'd than youthful pair removed
From fear of want—by mutual friends approved—
Short time to wait, and in that time to live
With all the pleasures hope and fancy give;
Their equal passion raised on just esteem,
When reason sanctions all that love can dream?

Yes! reason sanctions what stern fate denies:
The early prospect in the glory dies,
As the soft smiles on dying infants play
In their mild features, and then pass away.

The *Beauty* died ere she could yield her hand
In the high marriage by the Mother plann'd;
Who grieved indeed, but found a vast relief
In a cold heart, that ever warr'd with grief.

Lucy was present when her sister died,
Heiress to duties that she ill supplied:
There were no mutual feelings, sister arts,
No kindred taste, nor intercourse of hearts:
When in the mirror play'd the matron's smile,
The maiden's thoughts were trav'lling all the while;
And when desired to speak, she sigh'd to find
Her pause offended; "Envy made her blind:
"Tasteless she was, nor had a claim in life
"Above the station of a rector's wife;
"Yet as an heiress, she must shun disgrace,
"Although no heiress to her mother's face:
"It is your duty," said th' imperious dame,
"(Advanced your fortune,) to advance your name,
"And with superior rank, superior offers claim:
"Your sister's lover, when his sorrows die,
"May look upon you, and for favour sigh;
"Nor can you offer a reluctant hand;
"His birth is noble, and his seat is grand."

Alarm'd was Lucy, was in tears—"A fool!
"Was she a child in love?—a miss at school?
"Doubts any mortal, if a change of state
"Dissolves all claims and ties of earlier date?"

The Rector doubted, for he came to mourn
A sister dead, and with a wife return:
Lucy with heart unchanged received the youth,
True in herself, confiding in his truth;
But own'd her mother's change; the haughty dame
Pour'd strong contempt upon the youthful flame;
She firmly vow'd her purpose to pursue,
Judged her own cause, and bade the youth adieu!
The lover begg'd, insisted, urged his pain,
His brother wrote to threaten and complain;
Her sister reasoning proved the promise made,
Lucy appealing to a parent pray'd;
But all opposed the event that she design'd,
And all in vain—she never changed her mind;
But coldly answer'd in her wonted way,
That she "would rule, and Lucy must obey."

With peevish fear, she saw her health decline,
And cried, "Oh! monstrous, for a man to pine!
"But if your foolish heart must yield to love,
"Let him possess it whom I now approve;
"This is my pleasure."—Still the Rector came
With larger offers and with bolder claim;
But the stern lady would attend no more—
She frown'd, and rudely pointed to the door;
Whate'er he wrote, he saw unread return'd,
And he, indignant, the dishonour spurn'd:
Nay, fix'd suspicion where he might confide,
And sacrificed his passion to his pride.

Lucy, meantime, though threaten'd and distress'd;
Against her marriage made a strong protest:
All was domestic war; the Aunt rebell'd.
Against the sovereign will, and was expell'd;
And every power was tried, and every art,
To bend to falsehood one determined heart;
Assail'd, in patience it received the shock,
Soft as the wave, unshaken as the rock:
But while th' unconquer'd soul endures the storm
Of angry fate, it preys upon the form;
With conscious virtue she resisted still,
And conscious love gave vigour to her will:
But Lucy's trial was at hand; with joy
The Mother cried—"Behold your constant boy—
"Thursday—was married:—take the paper, sweet,
"And read the conduct of your reverend cheat;
"See with what pomp of coaches, in what crowd
"The creature married—of his falsehood proud!
"False, did I say?—at least no whining fool;
"And thus will hopeless passions ever cool:
"But shall his bride your single state reproach?
"No! give him crowd for crowd, and coach for coach.
"Oh! you retire; reflect then, gentle miss,
"And gain some spirit in a cause like this."

Some spirit Lucy gain'd; a steady soul,
Defying all persuasion, all control:
In vain reproach, derision, threats were tried;
The constant mind all outward force defied,
By vengeance vainly urged, in vain assail'd by pride;
Fix'd in her purpose, perfect in her part,
She felt the courage of a wounded heart;
The world receded from her rising view,
When heaven approach'd as earthly things withdrew;
Not strange before, for in the days of love,
Joy, hope, and pleasure, she had thoughts above,
Pious when most of worldly prospects fond,
When they best pleased her she could look beyond:—
Had the young priest a faithful lover died,
Something had been her bosom to divide;
Now heaven had all, for in her holiest views
She saw the matron whom she fear'd to lose;
While from her parent, the dejected maid
Forced the unpleasant thought, or thinking pray'd.

Surprised, the Mother saw the languid frame,
And felt indignant, yet forbore to blame;
Once with a frown she cried, "And do you mean
"To die of love—the folly of fifteen?"
But as her anger met with no reply,
She let the gentle girl in quiet die;
And to her sister wrote, impell'd by pain,
"Come quickly, Martha, or you come in vain."
Lucy meantime profess'd with joy sincere,
That nothing held, employ'd, engaged her here.

"I am an humble actor, doom'd to play
"A part obscure, and then to glide away:
"Incurious how the great or happy shine,
"Or who have parts obscure and sad as mine;
"In its best prospect I but wish'd for life,
"To be th' assiduous, gentle, useful wife;
"That lost, with wearied mind, and spirit poor,
"I drop my efforts, and can act no more;
"With growing joy I feel my spirits tend
"To that last scene where all my duties end."

Hope, ease, delight, the thoughts of dying gave,
Till Lucy spoke with fondness of the grave;
She smiled with wasted form, but spirit firm,
And said, "She left but little for the worm:"
As toll'd the bell, "There's one," she said, "hath press'd
"Awhile before me to the bed of rest:"[1]
And she beside her with attention spread
The decorations of the maiden dead.

While quickly thus the mortal part declin'd,
The happiest visions fill'd the active mind;
A soft, religious melancholy gain'd
Entire possession, and for ever reign'd:
On Holy Writ her mind reposing dwelt,
She saw the wonders, she the mercies felt;

[1] [These were the very words of Mr. Crabbe's own mother during her last illness. It happening that a friend and neighbour was slowly yielding at the same time to the same hopeless disorder as herself, she every morning used to desire her daughter to see if this sufferer's window was opened; saying cheerfully, "She must make haste, or I shall be at rest before her."—See *ante*, pp. 29, 30.]

Till, in a bless'd and glorious reverie,
She seem'd the Saviour as on earth to see,
And, fill'd with love divine, th' attending friend to be;
Or she who trembling, yet confiding, stole
Near to the garment, touch'd it, and was whole;
When, such th' intenseness of the working thought,
On her it seem'd the very deed was wrought;
She the glad patient's fear and rapture found,
The holy transport, and the healing wound;
This was so fix'd, so grafted in the heart,
That she adopted, nay became the part:
But one chief scene was present to her sight,
Her Saviour resting in the tomb by night;
Her fever rose, and still her wedded mind
Was to that scene, that hallow'd cave, confin'd—
Where in the shade of death the body laid,
There watch'd the spirit of the wandering maid;
Her looks were fix'd, entranced, illumed, serene,
In the still glory of the midnight scene:
There at her Saviour's feet, in visions bless'd,
Th' enraptured maid a sacred joy possess'd;
In patience waiting for the first-born ray
Of that all-glorious and triumphant day:
To this idea all her soul she gave,
Her mind reposing by the sacred grave;
Then sleep would seal the eye, the vision close,
And steep the solemn thoughts in brief repose.

Then grew the soul serene, and all its powers
Again restored, illumed the dying hours;
But reason dwelt where fancy stray'd before,
And the mind wander'd from its views no more;
Till death approach'd, when every look express'd
A sense of bliss, till every sense had rest.

The mother lives, and has enough to buy
Th' attentive ear and the submissive eye
Of abject natures—these are daily told,
How triumph'd beauty in the days of old;
How, by her window seated, crowds have cast
Admiring glances, wondering as they pass'd;
How from her carriage as she stepp'd to pray,
Divided ranks would humbly make her way;
And how each voice in the astonish'd throng
Pronounced her peerless as she moved along.

Her picture then the greedy Dame displays:
Touch'd by no shame, she now demands its praise;
In her tall mirror then she shows a face,
Still coldly fair with unaffecting grace;
These she compares: "It has the form," she cries,
"But wants the air, the spirit, and the eyes;
"This, as a likeness, is correct and true,
"But there alone the living grace we view."
This said, th' applauding voice the Dame requir'd,
And, gazing, slowly from the glass retired.

[1] [A surgeon of Ipswich had an addition to his family just as he had obtained the consent of a young lady to marry him. The breaking off of the match, by the good principle and delicacy of the intended bride, gave rise to much difference of opinion at the time, and suggested this tale.]

TALE IX.

ARABELLA.[1]

Thrice blessed they that master so their blood—
But earthly happier is the rose distill'd,
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.
Midsummer Night's Dream.

I something do excuse the thing I hate,
For his advantage whom I dearly love.
Measure for Measure.

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
Much Ado about Nothing.

Or a fair town where Doctor *Rack* was guide,
His only daughter was the boast and pride—
Wise *Arabella*, yet not wise alone,
She like a bright and polish'd brilliant shone;
Her father own'd her for his prop and stay,
Able to guide, yet willing to obey;
Pleased with her learning while discourse could please,
And with her love in languor and disease:
To every mother were her virtues known,
And to their daughters as a pattern shown;
Who in her youth had all that age requires,
And with her prudence all that youth admires:
These odious praises made the damsels try
Not to obtain such merits, but deny;
For, whatsoever wise mammas might say,
To guide a daughter, this was not the way;
From such applause disdain and anger rise,
And envy lives where emulation dies.
In all his strength, contends the noble horse
With one who just precedes him on the course;
But when the rival flies too far before,
His spirit fails, and he attempts no more.

This reasoning Maid, above her sex's dread,
Had dared to read, and dared to say she read;
Not the last novel, not the new-born play;
Not the mere trash and scandal of the day;
But (though her young companions felt the shock)
She studied Berkeley, Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke:
Her mind within the maze of history dwelt,
And of the moral Muse the beauty felt;
The merits of the Roman page she knew,
And could converse with More[2] and Montague:
Thus she became the wonder of the town,
From that she reap'd, to that she gave renown;
And strangers coming, all were taught t' admire
The learned lady, and the lofty spire.

[2] [Hannah More, authoress of 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife,' &c. &c. &c., died at the age of eighty-six, in 1833: the celebrated Mrs. Montague died, aged eighty, in 1800.]

Thus Fame in public fix'd the Maid where all
Might throw their darts, and see the idol fall:
A hundred arrows came with vengeance keen,
From tongues envenom'd, and from arms unseen;
A thousand eyes were fix'd upon the place,
That, if she fell, she might not fly disgrace:
But malice vainly throws the poison'd dart,
Unless our frailty shows the peccant part;
And Arabella still preserved her name
Untouch'd, and shone with undisputed fame;
Her very notice some respect would cause,
And her esteem was honour and applause.

Men she avoided; not in childish fear,
As if she thought some savage foe was near;
Not as a prude, who hides that man should seek,
Or who by silence hints that they should speak;
But with discretion all the sex she view'd,
Ere yet engaged pursuing or pursued;
Ere love had made her to his vices blind,
Or hid the favourite's failings from her mind.

Thus was the picture of the man portray'd,
By merit destined for so rare a maid;
At whose request she might exchange her state,
Or still be happy in a virgin's fate:—
He must be one with manners like her own,
His life unquestion'd, his opinions known;
His stainless virtue must all tests endure,
His honour spotless, and his bosom pure;
She no allowance made for sex or times,
Of lax opinion—crimes were ever crimes;
No wretch forsaken must his frailty curse,
No spurious offspring drain his private purse:
He at all times his passions must command,
And yet possess—or be refused her hand.

All this without reserve the maiden told,
And some began to weigh the rector's gold;
To ask what sum a prudent man might gain,
Who had such store of virtues to maintain?

A Doctor *Campbell*, north of Tweed, came forth,
Declared his passion, and proclaim'd his worth;
Not unapproved, for he had much to say
On every cause, and in a pleasant way;
Not all his trust was in a pliant tongue,
His form was good, and ruddy he, and young:
But though the doctor was a man of parts,
He read not deeply male or female hearts;
But judged that all whom he esteem'd as wise
Must think alike, though some assumed disguise;
That every reasoning Bramin, Christian, Jew,
Of all religions took their liberal view;
And of her own, no doubt, this learned Maid
Denied the substance, and the forms obey'd:
And thus persuaded, he his thoughts express'd
Of her opinions, and his own profess'd:
"All states demand this aid, the vulgar need
"Their priests and pray'rs, their sermons and their creed;
"And those of stronger minds should never speak
"(In his opinion) what might hurt the weak.
"A man may smile, but still he should attend
"His hour at church, and be the Church's friend,
"What there he thinks conceal, and what he hears commend."

Frank was the speech, but heard with high disdain,
Nor had the doctor leave to speak again;
A man who own'd, nay gloried in deceit,
"He might despise her, but he should not cheat."
The Vicar *Holmes* appear'd: he heard it said
That ancient men best pleased the prudent maid;
And true it was her ancient friends she loved.
Servants when old she favour'd and approved;
Age in her pious parents she revered,
And neighbours were by length of days endear'd;
But, if her husband too must ancient be,
The good old vicar found it was not he.

On Captain *Bligh* her mind in balance hung—
Though valiant, modest; and reserved, though young:
Against these merits must defects be set—
Though poor, imprudent; and though proud, in debt:
In vain the captain close attention paid;
She found him wanting, whom she fairly weigh'd.

Then came a youth, and all their friends agreed
That *Edward Huntly* was the man indeed;
Respectful duty he had paid awhile,
Then ask'd her hand, and had a gracious smile:
A lover now declared, he led the fair
To woods and fields, to visits, and to pray'r;
Then whisper'd softly—"Will you name the day?"
She softly whisper'd—"If you love me, stay."
"Oh! try me not beyond my strength," he cried:
"Oh! be not weak," the prudent Maid replied;
"But by some trial your affection prove—
"Respect, and not impatience, argues love:
"And love no more is by impatience known,
"Than ocean's depth is by its tempests shown:
"He whom a weak and fond impatience sways,
"But for himself with all his fervour prays,
"And not the maid he woos, but his own will obeys;
"And will she love the being who prefers,
"With so much ardour, his desire to hers?"

Young Edward grieved, but let not grief be seen;
He knew obedience pleased his fancy's queen:
Awhile he waited, and then cried—"Behold!
"The year advancing, be no longer cold!"
For she had promised—"Let the flowers appear,
"And I will pass with thee the smiling year:"
Then pressing grew the youth; the more he press'd,
The less inclined the maid to his request:
"Let June arrive."—Alas! when April came,
It brought a stranger, and the stranger, shame;
Nor could the Lover from his house persuade
A stubborn lass whom he had mournful made;
Angry and weak, by thoughtless vengeance moved,
She told her story to the Fair beloved;
In strongest words th' unwelcome truth was shown,
To blight his prospects, careless of her own.

Our heroine grieved, but had too firm a heart,
For him to soften, when she swore to part;
In vain his seeming penitence and pray'r,
His vows, his tears; she left him in despair:

His mother fondly laid her grief aside,
And to the reason of the nymph applied.—

"It well becomes thee, lady, to appear,
"But not to be in very truth, severe;
"Although the crime be odious in thy sight,
"That daring sex is taught such things to slight:
"His heart is thine, although it once was frail;
"Think of his grief, and let his love prevail!"

"Plead thou no more," the lofty lass return'd:
"Forgiving woman is deceived and spurn'd:
"Say that the crime is common—shall I take
"A common man my wedded lord to make?
"See! a weak woman by his arts betray'd,
"An infant born his father to upbraid;
"Shall I forgive his vileness, take his name,
"Sanction his error, and partake his shame?
"No! this assent would kindred frailty prove,
"A love for him would be a vicious love:
"Can a chaste maiden secret counsel hold
"With one whose crime by every mouth is told?
"Forbid it spirit, prudence, virtuous pride;
"He must despise me, were he not denied:
"The way from vice the erring mind to win
"Is with presuming sinners to begin,
"And show, by scorning them, a just contempt for sin."

The youth, repulsed, to one more mild convey'd
His heart, and smiled on the remorseless maid;
The maid, remorseless in her pride, the while
Despised the insult, and return'd the smile.

First to admire, to praise her, and defend,
Was (now in years advanced) a virgin-friend:
Much she preferr'd, she cried, the single state,
"It was her choice"—it surely was her fate;
And much it pleased her in the train to view
A maiden vot'ress, wise and lovely too.

Time to the yielding mind his change imparts,
He varies notions, and he alters hearts;
'T is right, 't is just to feel contempt for vice,
But he that shows it may be over-nice:
There are who feel, when young, the false sublime,
And proudly love to show disdain for crime;
To whom the future will new thoughts supply,
The pride will soften, and the scorn will die;
Nay, where they still the vice itself condemn,
They bear the vicious, and consort with them:
Young Captain Grove, when one had changed his side,
Despised the venal turncoat, and defied;
Old Colonel Grove now shakes him by the hand,
Though he who bribes may still his vote command.
Why would not Ellen to Belinda speak,
When she had flown to London for a week,
And then return'd, to every friend's surprise,
With twice the spirit, and with half the size?
She spoke not then—but, after years had flown,
A better friend had Ellen never known:
Was it the lady her mistake had seen?
Or had she also such a journey been?
No: 't was the gradual change in human hearts,
That time, in commerce with the world, imparts;
That on the roughest temper throws disguise,
And steals from virtue her asperities.

The young and ardent, who with glowing zeal
Felt wrath for trifles, and were proud to feel,
Now find those trifles all the mind engage,
To soothe dull hours, and cheat the cares of age;
As young Zelinda, in her quaker-dress,
Disdain'd each varying fashion's vile excess,
And now her friends on old Zelinda gaze,
Pleased in rich silks and orient gems to blaze:
Changes like these 't is folly to condemn,
So virtue yields not, nor is changed with them.

Let us proceed:—Twelve brilliant years were past,
Yet each with less of glory than the last.
Whether these years to this fair virgin gave
A softer mind—effect they often have;
Whether the virgin-state was not so bless'd
As that good maiden in her zeal profess'd;
Or whether lovers falling from her train,
Gave greater price to those she could retain,
Is all unknown;—but Arabella now
Was kindly listening to a Merchant's vow,
Who offer'd terms so fair, against his love
To strive was folly, so she never strove.—
Man in his earlier days we often find
With a too easy and unguarded mind;
But by increasing years and prudence taught,
He grows reserved, and locks up every thought:
Not thus the maiden, for in blooming youth
She hides her thought and guards the tender truth:
This, when no longer young, no more she hides,
But frankly in the favour'd swain confides:
Man, stubborn man, is like the growing tree,
That, longer standing, still will harder be;
And like its fruit, the virgin, first austere,
Then kindly softening with the ripening year.

Now was the lover urgent, and the kind
And yielding lady to his suit inclined:
"A little time, my friend, is just, is right;
"We must be decent in our neighbours' sight:"
Still she allow'd him of his hopes to speak,
And in compassion took off week by week;
Till few remain'd, when, wearied with delay,
She kindly meant to take off day by day.

That female Friend who gave our virgin praise
For flying man and all his treacherous ways,
Now heard with mingled anger, shame, and fear,
Of one accepted, and a wedding near;
But she resolved again with friendly zeal
To make the maid her scorn of wedlock feel;
For she was grieved to find her work undone,
And like a sister mourn'd the failing nun.

Why are these gentle maidens prone to make
Their sister-doves the tempting world forsake?
Why all their triumph when a maid disdains
The tyrant sex, and scorns to wear its chains?
Is it pure joy to see a sister flown
From the false pleasures they themselves have known?
Or do they, as the call-birds in the cage,
Try, in pure envy, others to engage?
And therefore paint their native woods and groves,
As scenes of dangerous joys and naughty loves?

Strong was the maiden's hope; her friend was proud,
And had her notions to the world avow'd;
And, could she find the Merchant weak and frail,
With power to prove it, then she must prevail:
For she aloud would publish his disgrace,
And save his victim from a man so base.

When all inquiries had been duly made,
Came the kind Friend her burthen to unlade:—
"Alas! my dear! not all our care and art
"Can thread the maze of man's deceitful heart:
"Look not surprise—nor let resentment swell
"Those lovely features, all will yet be well;
"And thou, from love's and man's deceptions free,
"Wilt dwell in virgin-state, and walk to Heaven with me."

The Maiden frown'd, and then conceived "that wives
"Could walk as well, and lead as holy lives,
"As angry prudes who scorn'd the marriage-chain,
"Or luckless maids, who sought it still in vain."

The Friend was vex'd—she paused: at length she cried,
"Know your own danger, then your lot decide:
"That traitor Beswell, while he seeks your hand,
"Has, I affirm, a wanton at command;
"A slave, a creature from a foreign place,
"The nurse and mother of a spurious race;
"Brown ugly bastards (Heaven the word forgive,
"And the deed punish!) in his cottage live;
"To town if business calls him, there he stays
"In sinful pleasures wasting countless days.
"Nor doubt the facts, for I can witness call,
"For every crime, and prove them one and all."

Here ceased th' informer; Arabella's look
Was like a schoolboy's puzzled by his book;
Intent she cast her eyes upon the floor,
Paused—then replied—
"I wish to know no more:
"I question not *your motive*, zeal, or love,
"But must decline such dubious points to prove.
"All is not true, I judge, for who can guess
"Those deeds of darkness men with care suppress?
"He brought a slave perhaps to England's coast,
"And made her free; it is our country's boast!
"And she perchance *too* grateful—good and *ill*
"Were sown at first, and grow together still;
"The colour'd infants on the village green,
"What are they more than we have often seen?
"Children half-clothed who round their village stray,
"In sun or rain, now starved, now beaten, they
"Will the dark colour of their fate betray:
"Let us in Christian love for all account,
"And then behold to what such tales amount."

"His heart is evil," said the impatient Friend:
"My duty bids me try that heart to mend,"
Replied the virgin; "we may be too nice
"And lose a soul in our *contempt* of vice;
"If false the charge, I then shall show regard
"For a good man, and be his just reward:
"And what for virtue can I better do
"Than to reclaim him, if the charge be true?"

She spoke, nor more her holy work delay'd;
'T was time to lend an erring mortal aid:
"The noblest way," she judged, "a soul to win,
"Was with an act of kindness to begin,
"To make the sinner sure, and then t' attack the sin." [3]

TALE X.

THE LOVER'S JOURNEY.[1]

The sun is in the heavens, and the proud day,
Attended with the pleasures of the world,
Is all too wanton. *King John.*

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact.
Midsummer Night's Dream.

Oh! how this spring of love resembleth
Th' uncertain glory of an April day,
Which now shows all her beauty to the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away.
Two Gentlemen of Verona.

And happily I have arrived at last
Unto the wished haven of my bliss.
Taming of the Shrew.

It is the Soul that sees: the outward eyes
Present the object, but the Mind descries;
And thence *delight*, disgust, or cool indiff'rence rise:
When minds are joyful, then we look around,
And what is seen is all on fairy ground;
Again they sicken, and on every view
Cast their own dull and melancholy hue;
Or, if absorb'd by their peculiar cares,
The vacant eye on viewless matter glares,

[3] As the author's purpose in this tale may be mistaken, he wishes to observe that conduct like that of the lady's here described must be meritorious or censurable just as the motives to it are pure or selfish; that these motives may in a great measure be concealed from the mind of the agent; and that we often take credit to our virtue for actions which spring originally from our tempers, inclinations, or our indifference. It cannot therefore be improper, much less immoral, to give an instance of such self-deception.

[1] ["It was in his walks between Aldborough and Beccles that Mr. Crabbe passed through the very scenery described in the first part of 'The Lover's Journey;' while near Beccles, in another direction, he found the contrast of rich vegetation introduced in the latter part of that tale; nor have I any doubt that the *disappointment* of the story figures out something that, on one of these visits, befell himself, and the feelings with which he received it.

'Gone to a friend, she tells me;—I commend
Her purpose:—means she to a *female friend?*' &c.

For truth compels me to say that he was by no means free from the less amiable sign of a strong attachment—jealousy."—*Life, ante*, p. 11.]

Our feelings still upon our views attend,
And their own natures to the objects lend:
Sorrow and joy are in their influence sure,
Long as the passion reigns th' effects endure;
But Love in minds his various changes makes,
And clothes each object with the change he takes;
His light and shade on every view he throws,
And on each object what he feels bestows.

Fair was the morning, and the month was June,
When rose a Lover;—love awakens soon:
Brief his repose, yet much he dreamt the while
Of that day's meeting, and his *Laura's* smile:
Fancy and love that name assign'd to her,
Call'd Susan in the parish-register;
And he no more was John—his Laura gave
The name *Orlando* to her faithful slave.

Bright shone the glory of the rising day,
When the fond traveller took his favourite way;
He mounted gaily, felt his bosom light,
And all he saw was pleasing in his sight.

"Ye hours of expectation, quickly fly,
"And bring on hours of bless'd reality;
"When I shall Laura see, beside her stand,
"Hear her sweet voice, and press her yielded hand."

First o'er a barren heath beside the coast
Orlando rode, and joy began to boast.

"This neat low gorse," said he, "with golden bloom,
"Delights each sense, is beauty, is perfume;
"And this gay ling, with all its purple flowers,
"A man at leisure might admire for hours;
"This green-fringed cup-moss has a scarlet tip,
"That yields to nothing but my Laura's lip;
"And then how fine this herbage! men may say
"A heath is barren; nothing is so gay:
"Barren or bare to call such charming scene
"Argues a mind possess'd by care and spleen."

Onward he went, and fiercer grew the heat,
Dust rose in clouds before the horse's feet;
For now he pass'd through lanes of burning sand,
Bounds to thin crops or yet uncultured land;
Where the dark poppy flourish'd on the dry
And sterile soil, and mock'd the thin-set rye.

"How lovely this!" the rapt Orlando said;
"With what delight is labouring man repaid!
"The very lane has sweets that all admire,
"The rambling suckling, and the vigorous brier;
"See! wholesome wormwood grows beside the way,
"Where dew-press'd yet the dog-rose bends the spray;
"Fresh herbs the fields, fair shrubs the banks adorn,
"And snow-white bloom falls flaky from the thorn;
"No fostering hand they need, no sheltering wall;
"They spring uncultured, and they bloom for all."

The Lover rode as hasty lovers ride,
And reach'd a common pasture wild and wide;
Small black-legg'd sheep devour with hunger keen
The meagre herbage, fleshless, lank, and lean:
Such o'er thy level turf, Newmarket! stray,
And there, with other *black-legs*,[2] find their prey.
He saw some scatter'd hovels; turf was piled
In square brown stacks; a prospect, bleak and wild!
A mill, indeed, was in the centre found,
With short sear herbage withering all around;
A smith's black shed opposed a wright's long shop,
And join'd an inn where humble travellers stop.

"Ay, this is Nature," said the gentle 'Squire;
"This ease, peace, pleasure—who would not admire?
"With what delight these sturdy children play,
"And joyful rustics at the close of day;
"Sport follows labour; on this even space
"Will soon commence the wrestling and the race;
"Then will the village-maidens leave their home,
"And to the dance with buoyant spirits come;
"No affectation in their looks is seen,
"Nor know they what disguise or flattery mean;
"Nor aught to move an envious pang they see,
"Easy their service, and their love is free;
"Hence early springs that love, it long endures,
"And life's first comfort, while they live, ensures:
"They the low roof and rustic comforts prize,
"Nor cast on prouder mansions envying eyes:
"Sometimes the news at yonder town they hear,
"And learn what busier mortals feel and fear;
"Secure themselves, although by tales amazed
"Of towns bombarded and of cities razed;
"As if they doubted, in their still retreat,
"The very news that makes their quiet sweet,
"And their days happy—happier only knows
"He on whom Laura her regard bestows."

On rode Orlando, counting all the while
The miles he pass'd, and every coming mile;
Like all attracted things, he quicker flies,
The place approaching where th' attraction lies;
When next appear'd a *dam*—so call the place—
Where lies a road confined in narrow space;
A work of labour, for on either side
Is level fen, a prospect wild and wide,
With dikes on either hand by ocean's self supplied:
Far on the right the distant sea is seen,
And salt the springs that feed the marsh between;
Beneath an ancient bridge, the straiten'd flood
Rolls through its sloping banks of slimy mud;
Near it a sunken boat resists the tide,
That frets and hurries to th' opposing side;
The rushes sharp, that on the borders grow,
Bend their brown flow'rets to the stream below,
Impure in all its course, in all its progress slow:

2 ["Gamblers or sharpers on the turf or in the cock-pit; so called, perhaps, from their appearing generally in boots, or else from game-cocks, whose legs are always black."—GROSE.]

Here a grave Flora[3] scarcely deigns to bloom,
Nor wears a rosy blush, nor sheds perfume:
The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread
Partake the nature of their fenny bed;
Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume;
Here the dwarf sallows creep, the septfoil harsh,
And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh;
Low on the ear the distant billows sound,
And just in view appears their stony bound;
No hedge nor tree conceals the glowing sun,
Birds, save a wat'ry tribe, the district shun,
Nor chirp among the reeds where bitter waters run.[4]

"Various as beauteous, Nature, is thy face,"
Exclaim'd Orlando: "all that grows has grace:
"All are appropriate—bog, and marsh, and fen,
"Are only poor to undiscerning men;
"Here may the nice and curious eye explore
"How Nature's hand adorns the rushy moor;
"Here the rare moss in secret shade is found,
"Here the sweet myrtle of the shaking ground;
"Beauties are these that from the view retire,
"But well repay th' attention they require;
"For these my Laura will her home forsake,
"And all the pleasures they afford partake."

Again, the country was enclosed, a wide
And sandy road has banks on either side;
Where, lo! a hollow on the left appear'd,
And there a gipsy tribe their tent had rear'd;
'T was open spread, to catch the morning sun,
And they had now their early meal begun,
When two brown boys just left their grassy seat,
The early Trav'ller with their prayers to greet:
While yet Orlando held his pence in hand,
He saw their sister on her duty stand;
Some twelve years old, demure, affected, sly,
Prepared the force of early powers to try;
Sudden a look of languor he descries,
And well-feign'd apprehension in her eyes;
Train'd but yet savage, in her speaking face
He mark'd the features of her vagrant race;
When a light laugh and roguish leer express'd
The vice implanted in her youthful breast:
Forth from the tent her elder brother came,
Who seem'd offended, yet forbore to blame
The young designer, but could only trace
The looks of pity in the Trav'ller's face:
Within, the Father, who from fences nigh
Had brought the fuel for the fire's supply,
Watch'd now the feeble blaze, and stood dejected by.
On ragged rug, just borrow'd from the bed,
And by the hand of coarse indulgence fed,
In dirty patchwork negligently dress'd,
Reclined the Wife, an infant at her breast;
In her wild face some touch of grace remain'd,
Of vigour palsied and of beauty stain'd;
Her bloodshot eyes on her unheeding mate
Were wrathful turn'd, and seem'd her wants to state,
Cursing his tardy aid—her Mother there
With gipsy-state engross'd the only chair;
Solemn and dull her look; with such she stands,
And reads the milk-maid's fortune in her hands,
Tracing the lines of life; assumed through years,
Each feature now the steady falsehood wears:
With hard and savage eye she views the food,
And grudging pinches their intruding brood;
Last in the group, the worn-out Grandsire sits
Neglected, lost, and living but by fits:
Useless, despised, his worthless labours done,
And half protected by the vicious Son,
Who half supports him; he with heavy glance
Views the young ruffians who around him dance;
And, by the sadness in his face, appears
To trace the progress of their future years:
Through what strange course of misery, vice, deceit,
Must wildly wander each unpractised cheat!
What shame and grief, what punishment and pain,
Sport of fierce passions, must each child sustain—
Ere they like him approach their latter end,
Without a hope, a comfort, or a friend![5]

But this Orlando felt not; "Rogues," said he,
"Doubtless they are, but merry rogues they be;
"They wander round the land, and be it true
"They break the laws—then let the laws pursue
"The wanton idlers; for the life they live,
"Acquit I cannot, but I can forgive."
This said, a portion from his purse was thrown,
And every heart seem'd happy like his own.

He hurried forth, for now the town was nigh—
"The happiest man of mortal men am I."
Thou art! but change in every state is near
(So while the wretched hope, the bless'd may fear):

[3] The ditches of a fen so near the ocean are lined with irregular patches of a coarse and stained lava; a muddy sediment rests on the horse-tail and other perennial herbs, which in part conceal the shallowness of the stream; a fat-leaved pale-flowering scurvy-grass appears early in the year, and the razor-edged bulrush in the summer and autumn. The fen itself has a dark and saline herbage; there are rushes and *arrow-head*, and in a few patches the flakes of the cotton-grass are seen, but more commonly the *sea-aster*, the dullest of that numerous and hardy genus; the *thrift*, blue in flower, but withering and remaining withered till the winter scatters it; the *saltwort*, both simple and shrubby; a few kinds of grass changed by their soil and atmosphere, and low plants of two or three denominations undistinguished in a general view of the scenery;—such is the vegetation of the fen when it is at a small distance from the ocean; and in this case there arise from it effluvia strong and peculiar, half saline, half putrid, which would be considered by most people as offensive, and by some as dangerous; but there are others to whom singularity of taste or association of ideas has rendered it agreeable and pleasant.

[4] [This picture of a fen is what few other artists would have thought of attempting, and no other than Mr. Crabbe could possibly have executed. The features of the fine country are less perfectly drawn: but, what, indeed, could be made of the vulgar fine country of *England*? If Mr. Crabbe had had the good fortune to live among *our* Highland hills, and lakes, and upland woods—our living floods sweeping the forests of pine—our lonely vales and rough copse-covered cliffs; what a delicious picture would his unrivalled powers have enabled him to give to the world.—JEFFREY.]

[5] [This picture is evidently finished *con amore*, and appears to us to be absolutely perfect, both in its moral and its physical expression.—JEFFREY.]

" Say, where is Laura?"—" That her words must
show,"
A lass replied; " read this, and thou shalt know!"

" What, gone!—' Her friend insisted—forced
to go:—
" Is vex'd, was teased, could not refuse her!'—
No?
" 'But you can follow.' Yes! 'The miles are
few,
" The way is pleasant; will you come?—Adieu!
" Thy Laura!' No! I feel I must resign
" The pleasing hope; thou hadst been here, if
mine.
" A lady was it?—Was no brother there?
" But why should I afflict me, if there were?
" 'The way is pleasant.' What to me the way?
" I cannot reach her till the close of day.
" My dumb companion! is it thus we speed?
" Not I from grief nor thou from toil art freed;
" Still art thou doom'd to travel and to pine,
" For my vexation—What a fate is mine!

" Gone to a friend, she tells me;—I commend
" Her purpose: means she to a female friend?
" By Heaven, I wish she suffer'd half the pain
" Of hope protracted through the day in vain.
" Shall I persist to see th' ungrateful maid?
" Yes, I will see her, slight her, and upbraid.
" What! in the very hour? She knew the time,
" And doubtless chose it to increase her crime."

Forth rode Orlando by a river's side,
Inland and winding, smooth, and full, and wide,
That roll'd majestic on, in one soft-flowing tide;
The bottom gravel, flow'ry were the banks,
Tall willows waving in their broken ranks;
The road, now near, now distant, winding led
By lovely meadows which the waters fed;
He pass'd the way-side inn, the village spire,
Nor stopp'd to gaze, to question, or admire;
On either side the rural mansions stood,
With hedge-row trees, and hills high-crown'd with
wood,
And many a devious stream that reach'd the nobler
flood.

" I hate these scenes," Orlando angry cried,
" And these proud farmers! yes, I hate their
pride.
" See! that sleek fellow, how he strides along,
" Strong as an ox, and ignorant as strong;
" Can yon close crops a single eye detain
" But he who counts the profits of the grain?
" And these vile beans with deleterious smell,
" Where is their beauty? can a mortal tell?
" These deep fat meadows I detest; it shocks
" One's feelings there to see the grazing ox;—
" For slaughter fatted, as a lady's smile
" Rejoices man, and means his death the while.
" Lo! now the sons of labour! every day
" Employ'd in toil, and vex'd in every way;
" Theirs is but mirth assumed, and they conceal,
" In their affected joys, the ills they feel:
" I hate these long green lanes; there's nothing
seen
" In this vile country but eternal green;
" Woods! waters! meadows! Will they never
end?
" 'T is a vile prospect:—Gone to see a friend!"

Still on he rode! a mansion fair and tall
Rose on his view—the pride of Loddon Hall:
Spread o'er the park he saw the grazing steer,
The full-fed steed, and herds of bounding deer:
On a clear stream the vivid sunbeams play'd,
Through noble elms, and on the surface made
That moving picture, checker'd light and shade;
Th' attended children, there indulged to stray,
Enjoy'd and gave new beauty to the day;
Whose happy parents from their room were seen
Pleased with the sportive idlers on the green.

" Well!" said Orlando, " and for one so bless'd,
" A thousand reasoning wretches are distress'd;
" Nay, these, so seeming glad, are grieving like the
rest:
" Man is a cheat—and all but strive to hide
" Their inward misery by their outward pride.
" What do yon lofty gates and walls contain,
" But fruitless means to soothe unconquer'd pain?
" The parents read each infant daughter's smile,
" Form'd to seduce, encouraged to beguile;
" They view the boys unconscious of their fate,
" Sure to be tempted, sure to take the bait;
" These will be Lauras, sad Orlandos these—
" There 's guilt and grief in all one hears and sees."

Our Trav'ller, lab'ring up a hill, look'd down
Upon a lively, busy, pleasant town;
All he beheld were there alert, alive,
The busiest bees that ever stock'd a hive:
A pair were married, and the bells aloud
Proclaim'd their joy, and joyful seem'd the crowd;
And now, proceeding on his way, he spied,
Bound by strong ties, the bridegroom and the
bride;
Each by some friends attended, near they drew,
And spleen beheld them with prophetic view.

" Married! nay, mad!" Orlando cried in scorn;
" Another wretch on this unlucky morn:
" What are this foolish mirth, these idle joys?
" Attempts to stifle doubt and fear by noise:
" To me these robes, expressive of delight,
" Foreshow distress, and only grief excite;
" And for these cheerful friends, will they behold
" Their wailing brood in sickness, want, and cold;
" And his proud look, and her soft languid air
" Will—but I spare you—go, unhappy pair!"

And now, approaching to the Journey's end,
His anger fails, his thoughts to kindness tend,
He less offended feels, and rather fears t' offend:
Now gently rising, hope contends with doubt,
And casts a sunshine on the views without;
And still reviving joy and lingering gloom
Alternate empire o'er his soul assume;
Till, long perplex'd, he now began to find
The softer thoughts engross the settling mind:
He saw the mansion, and should quickly see
His Laura's self—and angry could he be?
No! the resentment melted all away——
" For this my grief a single smile will pay,"

Our trav'ller cried ;—" And why should it offend,
" That one so good should have a pressing friend?
" Grieve not, my heart! to find a favourite guest
" Thy pride and boast—ye selfish sorrows, rest ;
" She will be kind, and I again be bless'd."

While gentler passions thus his bosom sway'd,
He reach'd the mansion, and he saw the maid ;
" My Laura!"—" My Orlando!—this is kind ;
" In truth I came persuaded, not inclined :
" Our friends' amusement let us now pursue,
" And I to-morrow will return with you."

Like man entranced the happy Lover stood—
" As Laura wills, for she is kind and good ;
" Ever the truest, gentlest, fairest, best—
" As Laura wills : I see her and am bless'd."

Home went the Lovers through that busy place,
By Loddon Hall, the country's pride and grace ;
By the rich meadows where the oxen fed,
Through the green vale that form'd the river's bed ;
And by unnumber'd cottages and farms,
That have for musing minds unnumber'd charms ;
And how affected by the view of these
Was then Orlando?—did they pain or please ?

Nor pain nor pleasure could they yield—and why ?
The mind was fill'd, was happy, and the eye
Roved o'er the fleeting views, that but appear'd to die.

Alone Orlando on the morrow paced
The well-known road ; the gipsy-tent he traced ;
The dam high-raised, the reedy dykes between,
The scatter'd hovels on the barren green,
The burning sand, the fields of thin-set rye,
Mock'd by the useless Flora, blooming ky ;
And last the heath with all its various bloom,
And the close lanes that led the trav'ller home.

Then could these scenes the former joys renew?
Or was there now dejection in the view ?—
Nor one or other would they yield—and why ?
The mind was absent, and the vacant eye
Wander'd o'er viewless scenes, that but appear'd to die.[6]

[6] ['The Lover's Journey' is a pretty fancy, and well executed :—at least as to the description it contains. A lover takes a long ride to see his mistress; and, passing in full hope and joy through a barren and fenny country, finds beauty in everything. Being put out of humour, however, by missing the lady at the end of this stage, he proceeds through a lovely landscape, and finds everything ugly and disagreeable. At last he meets his fair one—is reconciled—and returns along with her; when the landscape presents neither beauty nor deformity, and excites no emotion whatever in a mind engrossed with more lively sensations. There is nothing in any part of Mr. Crabbe's writings more exquisite than some of the descriptions in this story.—JEFFREY.]

TALE XI.

EDWARD SHORE.

Seem they grave or learned?
Why, so didst thou.—Seem they religious?
Why, so didst thou ; or are they spare in diet,
Free from gross passion, or of mirth or anger,
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,
Garnish'd and deck'd in modest compliment,
Not working with the eye without the ear,
And but with purged judgment trusting neither?
Such and so finely bolted didst thou seem.—*Henry V.*

Better I were distract,
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by strong imagination lose
The knowledge of themselves. *Lear.*

GENIUS! thou gift of Heav'n! thou light divine!
Amid what dangers art thou doom'd to shine!
Oft will the body's weakness check thy force,
Oft damp thy vigour, and impede thy course ;
And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain
Thy nobler efforts, to contend with pain ;
Or Want (sad guest!) will in thy presence come,
And breathe around her melancholy gloom :
To life's low cares will thy proud thought confine,
And make her sufferings, her impatience, thine.[1]

Evil and strong, seducing passions prey
On soaring minds, and win them from their way,
Who then to Vice the subject spirits give,
And in the service of the conqu'ror live ;
Like captive Samson making sport for all,
Who fear'd their strength, and glory in their fall.

Genius, with virtue, still may lack the aid
Implored by humble minds, and hearts afraid ;
May leave to timid souls the shield and sword
Of the tried Faith, and the resistless Word ;
Amid a world of dangers venturing forth,
Frail, but yet fearless, proud in conscious worth,
Till strong temptation, in some fatal time,
Assails the heart, and wins the soul to crime ;
When left by honour, and by sorrow spent,
Unused to pray, unable to repent,
The nobler powers, that once exalted high
Th' aspiring man, shall then degraded lie :

[1] [What Shakspeare says of the course of true love may be applied to the course of genius. How seldom it runs smooth—how seldom it finds a free channel! and what obstacles are to be overcome before it can make one, even if it have strength and fortune finally to force its way! To say nothing of the "mute inglorious Miltons" who lie in many a churchyard—the mighty spirits which have never found opportunities to unfold themselves—it is but too true that the greatest efforts of learning and industry and intellect have been produced by men who were struggling with difficulties of every kind ;—such is the melancholy sum of what the biography of men of genius almost uniformly presents.—SOUTHEY.]

Reason, through anguish, shall her throne forsake,
And strength of mind but stronger madness make.

When *Edward Shore* had reach'd his twentieth year,
He felt his bosom light, his conscience clear;
Applause at school the youthful hero gain'd,
And trials there with manly strength sustain'd:
With prospects bright upon the world he came,
Pure love of virtue, strong desire of fame:
Men watch'd the way his lofty mind would take,
And all foretold the progress he would make.

Boast of these friends, to older men a guide,
Proud of his parts, but gracious in his pride;
He bore a gay good-nature in his face,
And in his air were dignity and grace;
Dress that became his state and years he wore,
And sense and spirit shone in Edward Shore.

Thus, while admiring friends the Youth beheld,
His own disgust their forward hopes repell'd;
For he unfix'd, unfixing, look'd around,
And no employment but in seeking found;
He gave his restless thoughts to views refined,
And shrank from worldly cares with wounded mind.

Rejecting trade, awhile he dwelt on laws,
"But who could plead, if unapproved the cause?"[2]
A doubting, dismal tribe physicians seem'd;
Divines o'er texts and disputations dream'd;
War and its glory he perhaps could love,
But there again he must the cause approve.

Our hero thought no deed should gain applause
Where timid virtue found support in laws;
He to all good would soar, would fly all sin,
By the pure prompting of the will within;
"Who needs a law that binds him not to steal,"
Ask'd the young teacher, "can he rightly feel?
"To curb the will, or arm in honour's cause,
"Or aid the weak—are these enforced by laws?
"Should we a foul, ungenerous action dread,
"Because a law condemns th' adulterous bed?
"Or fly pollution, not for fear of stain,
"But that some statute tells us to refrain?
"The grosser herd in ties like these we bind,
"In virtue's freedom moves th' enlighten'd mind."

"Man's heart deceives him," said a friend.—"Of course,"
Replied the Youth; "but has it power to force?
"Unless it forces, call it as you will,
"It is but wish, and proneness to the ill."

"Art thou not tempted?"—"Do I fall?" said Shore.
"The pure have fallen."—"Then are pure no more.

"While reason guides me, I shall walk aright,
"Nor need a steadier hand, or stronger light;
"Nor this in dread of awful threats, design'd
"For the weak spirit and the grov'ling mind;
"But that, engaged by thoughts and views sublime,
"I wage free war with grossness and with crime."
Thus look'd he proudly on the vulgar crew,
Whom statutes govern, and whom fears subdue.

Faith, with his virtue, he indeed profess'd,
But doubts deprived his ardent mind of rest;
Reason, his sovereign mistress, fail'd to show
Light through the mazes of the world below:[3]
Questions arose, and they surpass'd the skill
Of his sole aid, and would be dubious still;
These to discuss he sought no common guide,
But to the doubters *in* his doubts applied;
When all together might in freedom speak,
And their loved truth with mutual ardour seek.
Alas! though men who feel their eyes decay
Take more than common pains to find their way,
Yet, when for this they ask each other's aid,
Their mutual purpose is the more delay'd:
Of all their doubts, their reasoning clear'd not one,
Still the same spots were present in the sun;
Still the same scruples haunted Edward's mind,
Who found no rest, nor took the means to find.

But though with shaken faith, and slave to fame,
Vain and aspiring on the world he came,
Yet was he studious, serious, moral, grave,
No passion's victim, and no system's slave:
Vice he opposed, indulgence he disdain'd,
And o'er each sense in conscious triumph reign'd.

Who often reads will sometimes wish to write,
And Shore would yield instruction and delight:
A serious drama he design'd, but found
'T was tedious travelling in that gloomy ground;
A deep and solemn story he would try,
But grew ashamed of ghosts, and laid it by;
Sermons he wrote, but they who knew his creed,
Or knew it not, were ill-disposed to read;
And he would lastly be the nation's guide,
But, studying, fail'd to fix upon a side;
Fame he desired, and talents he possess'd,
But loved not labour, though he could not rest,
Nor firmly fix the vascillating mind,
That, ever working, could no centre find.

'T is thus a sanguine reader loves to trace
The Nile forth rushing on his glorious race;
Calm and secure the fancied traveller goes
Through sterile deserts and by threat'ning foes;
He thinks not then of Afric's scorching sands,
Th' Arabian sea, the Abyssinian bands;
Fasils[4] and Michaels, and the robbers all,
Whom we politely chiefs and heroes call:

[2] [See *ante*, p. 197.]

[3] ["Reason, the power
To guess at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp
Of wand'ring life, that winks and wakes by turns,
Fooling the follower betwixt shade and shining."
CONGREVE.]

[4] Fasil was a rebel chief, and Michael the general of the royal army in Abyssinia, when Mr. Bruce visited that country. In all other respects their characters were nearly similar. They are both represented as cruel and treacherous; and even the apparently strong distinction of loyal and rebellious is in a great measure set aside, when we are informed that Fasil was an open enemy, and Michael an insolent and ambitious controller of the royal person and family.

He of success alone delights to think,
He views that fount, he stands upon the brink,
And drinks a fancied draught, exulting so to drink.

In his own room, and with his books around,
His lively mind its chief employment found;
Then idly busy, quietly employ'd,
And, lost to life, his visions were enjoy'd:
Yet still he took a keen inquiring view
Of all that crowds neglect, desire, pursue;
And thus abstracted, curious, still, serene,
He, unemploy'd, beheld life's shifting scene;
Still more averse from vulgar joys and cares,
Still more unfitted for the world's affairs.

There was a house where Edward ofttimes went,
And social hours in pleasant trifling spent;
He read, conversed, and reason'd, sang and play'd,
And all were happy while the idler stay'd;
Too happy one! for thence arose the pain,
Till this engaging trifler came again.

But did he love? We answer, day by day,
The loving feet would take th' accustom'd way,
The amorous eye would rove as if in quest
Of something rare, and on the mansion rest;
The same soft passion touch'd the gentle tongue,
And *Anna*'s charms in tender notes were sung;
The ear, too, seem'd to feel the common flame,
Soothed and delighted with the fair one's name;
And thus, as love each other part possess'd,
The heart, no doubt, its sovereign power confess'd.

Pleased in her sight, the Youth required no more;
Not rich himself, he saw the damsel poor;
And he too wisely, nay, too kindly loved,
To pain the being whom his soul approved.

A serious Friend our cautious Youth possess'd,
And at his table sat a welcome guest:
Both unemploy'd, it was their chief delight
To read what free and daring authors write;
Authors who loved from common views to soar,
And seek the fountains never traced before:
Truth they profess'd, yet often left the true
And beaten prospect, for the wild and new.
His chosen friend his fiftieth year had seen,
His fortune easy, and his air serene;
Deist and atheist call'd; for few agreed
What were his notions, principles, or creed;
His mind reposed not, for he hated rest,
But all things made a query or a jest;
Perplex'd himself, he ever sought to prove
That man is doom'd in endless doubt to rove;
Himself in darkness he profess'd to be,
And would maintain that not a man could see.

The youthful Friend, dissentient, reason'd still
Of the soul's prowess, and the subject-will;
Of virtue's beauty, and of honour's force,
And a warm zeal gave life to his discourse:
Since from his feelings all his fire arose,
And he had interest in the themes he chose.

The Friend, indulging a sarcastic smile,
Said, "Dear enthusiast! thou wilt change thy style,
"When man's delusions, errors, crimes, deceit,
"No more distress thee, and no longer cheat."

Yet, lo! this cautious man, so coolly wise,
On a young Beauty fix'd unguarded eyes;
And her he married: Edward at the view
Bade to his cheerful visits long adieu;
But haply err'd, for this engaging bride
No mirth suppress'd, but rather cause supplied:
And when she saw the friends, by reasoning long,
Confused if right, and positive if wrong,
With playful speech, and smile that spoke delight,
She made them careless both of wrong and right.

This gentle damsel gave consent to wed,
With school and school-day dinners in her head:
She now was promised choice of daintiest food,
And costly dress, that made her sovereign good;
With walks on hilly heath to banish spleen,
And summer-visits when the roads were clean.
All these she loved, to these she gave consent,
And she was married to her heart's content.

Their manner this—the Friends together read,
Till books a cause for disputation bred;
Debate then follow'd, and the vapour'd child
Declared they argued till her head was wild;
And strange to her it was that mortal brain
Could seek the trial, or endure the pain.

Then, as the Friend reposed, the younger pair
Sat down to cards, and play'd beside his chair;
Till he, awaking, to his books applied,
Or heard the music of th' obedient bride:
If mild the evening, in the fields they stray'd,
And their own flock with partial eye survey'd;
But oft the husband, to indulgence prone,
Resumed his book, and bade them walk alone.

"Do, my kind Edward—I must take mine ease—
"Name the dear girl the planets and the trees:
"Tell her what warblers pour their evening song,
"What insects flutter, as you walk along;
"Teach her to fix the roving thoughts, to bind
"The wandering sense, and methodise the mind."

This was obey'd; and oft when this was done,
They calmly gazed on the declining sun;
In silence saw the glowing landscape fade,
Or, sitting, sang beneath the arbour's shade:
Till rose the moon, and on each youthful face
Shed a soft beauty and a dangerous grace.

When the young Wife beheld in long debate
The friends, all careless as she seeming sate,
It soon appear'd there was in one combined
The nobler person and the richer mind:
He wore no wig, no grisly beard was seen,
And none beheld him careless or unclean,
Or watch'd him sleeping. We indeed have heard
Of sleeping beauty, and it has appear'd;
'T is seen in infants—there indeed we find
The features soften'd by the slumbering mind;
But other beauties, when disposed to sleep,
Should from the eye of keen inspector keep:

The lovely nymph who would her swain surprise,
May close her mouth, but not conceal her eyes;
Sleep from the fairest face some beauty takes,
And all the homely features homelier makes:
So thought our wife, beholding with a sigh
Her sleeping spouse, and Edward smiling by.

A sick relation for the husband sent;
Without delay the friendly sceptic went;
Nor fear'd the youthful pair, for he had seen
The wife untroubled, and the friend serene;
No selfish purpose in his roving eyes,
No vile deception in her fond replies:
So judged the husband, and with judgment true,
For neither yet the guilt or danger knew.

What now remain'd? but they again should play
Th' accustom'd game, and walk th' accustom'd way;
With careless freedom should converse or read,
And the Friend's absence neither fear nor heed:
But rather now they seem'd confused, constrain'd;
Within their room still restless they remain'd,
And painfully they felt, and knew each other pain'd.
Ah, foolish men! how could ye thus depend,
One on himself, the other on his friend?

The Youth with troubled eye the lady saw,
Yet felt too brave, too daring to withdraw;
While she, with tuneless hand the jarring keys
Touching, was not one moment at her ease:
Now would she walk, and call her friendly guide,
Now speak of rain, and cast her cloak aside;
Seize on a book, unconscious what she read,
And restless still to new resources fled;
Then laugh'd aloud, then tried to look serene;
And ever changed, and every change was seen.

Painful it is to dwell on deeds of shame—
The trying day was past, another came;
The third was all remorse, confusion, dread,
And (all too late!) the fallen hero fled.

Then felt the Youth, in that seducing time,
How feebly Honour guards the heart from crime:
Small is his native strength; man needs the stay,
The strength imparted in the trying day;
For all that Honour brings against the force
Of headlong passion, aids its rapid course;
Its slight resistance but provokes the fire,
As wood-work stops the flame, and then conveys it higher.

The Husband came; a wife by guilt made bold
Had, meeting, soothed him, as in days of old;
But soon this fact transpired; her strong distress,
And his Friend's absence, left him nought to guess.

Still cool, though grieved, thus prudence bade him write—
"I cannot pardon, and I will not fight;
"Thou art too poor a culprit for the laws,
"And I too faulty to support my cause:
"All must be punish'd; I must sigh alone,
"At home thy victim for her guilt atone;
"And thou, unhappy! virtuous now no more,
"Must loss of fame, peace, purity deplore;
"Sinners with praise will pierce thee to the heart,
"And saints, deriding, tell thee what thou art."

Such was his fall; and Edward, from that time,
Felt in full force the censure and the crime—
Despised, ashamed; his noble views before,
And his proud thoughts, degraded him the more:
Should he repent—would that conceal his shame?
Could peace be his? It perish'd with his fame:
Himself he scorn'd, nor could his crime forgive;
He fear'd to die, yet felt ashamed to live:
Grieved, but not contrite, was his heart; oppress'd,
Not broken; not converted, but distress'd;
He wanted will to bend the stubborn knee,
He wanted light the cause of ill to see,
To learn how frail is man, how humble then should be;
For faith he had not, or a faith too weak
To gain the help that humbled sinners seek;
Else had he pray'd—to an offended God
His tears had flown a penitential flood;
Though far astray, he would have heard the call
Of mercy—"Come! return, thou prodigal:"
Then, though confused, distress'd, ashamed, afraid,
Still had the trembling penitent obey'd;
Though faith had fainted, when assail'd by fear,
Hope to the soul had whisper'd, "Persevere!"
Till in his Father's house, an humbled guest,
He would have found forgiveness, comfort, rest.

But all this joy was to our Youth denied
By his fierce passions and his daring pride;
And shame and doubt impell'd him in a course,
Once so abhorr'd, with unresisted force.
Proud minds and guilty, whom their crimes oppress,
Fly to new crimes for comfort and redress;
So found our fallen Youth a short relief
In wine, the opiate guilt applies to grief,—
From fleeting mirth that o'er the bottle lives,
From the false joy its inspiration gives,—
And from associates pleased to find a friend
With powers to lead them, gladden, and defend,
In all these scenes where transient ease is found,
For minds whom sins oppress and sorrows wound.

Wine is like anger; for it makes us strong,
Blind, and impatient, and it leads us wrong;
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long:
Thus led, thus strengthen'd, in an evil cause,
For folly pleading, sought the Youth applause;
Sad for a time, then eloquently wild,
He gaily spoke as his companions smiled;
Lightly he rose, and with his former grace
Proposed some doubt, and argued on the case;
Fate and foreknowledge were his favourite themes—
How vain man's purpose, how absurd his schemes:
"Whatever is, was ere our birth decreed;
"We think our actions from ourselves proceed,
"And idly we lament th' inevitable deed;
"It seems our own, but there 's a power above
"Directs the motion, nay, that makes us move;
"Nor good nor evil can you beings name,
"Who are but rooks and castles in the game;
"Superior natures with their puppets play,
"Till, bagg'd or buried, all are swept away."

Such were the notions of a mind to ill
Now prone, but ardent and determined still:
Of joy now eager, as before of fame,
And screen'd by folly when assail'd by shame,
Deeply he sank; obey'd each passion's call,
And used his reason to defend them all.

Shall I proceed, and step by step relate
The odious progress of a Sinner's fate?
No—let me rather hasten to the time
(Sure to arrive!) when misery waits on crime.

With Virtue, prudence fled; what Shore possess'd
Was sold, was spent, and he was now distress'd:
And Want, unwelcome stranger, pale and wan,
Met with her haggard looks the hurried man:
His pride felt keenly what he must expect
From useless pity and from cold neglect.

Struck by new terrors, from his friends he fled,
And wept his woes upon a restless bed;
Retiring late, at early hour to rise,
With shrunken features, and with bloodshot eyes:
If sleep one moment closed the dismal view,
Fancy her terrors built upon the true:
And night and day had their alternate woes,
That baffled pleasure, and that mock'd repose;
Till to despair and anguish was consign'd
The wreck and ruin of a noble mind.

Now seized for debt, and lodged within a jail,
He tried his friendships, and he found them fail;
Then fail'd his spirits, and his thoughts were all
Fix'd on his sins, his sufferings, and his fall:
His ruffled mind was pictured in his face,
Once the fair seat of dignity and grace:
Great was the danger of a man so prone
To think of madness, and to think alone;
Yet pride still lived, and struggled to sustain
The drooping spirit and the roving brain;
But this too fail'd: a Friend his freedom gave,
And sent him help the threat'ning world to brave;
Gave solid counsel what to seek or flee,
But still would stranger to his person be:
In vain! the truth determined to explore,
He traced the Friend whom he had wrong'd before.

This was too much; both aided and advised
By one who shunn'd him, pitied, and despised:
He bore it not; 't was a deciding stroke,
And on his reason like a torrent broke:
In dreadful stillness he appear'd a while,
With vacant horror and a ghastly smile;
Then rose at once into the frantic rage,
That force controll'd not, nor could love assuage.

Friends now appear'd, but in the Man was seen
The angry Maniac, with vindictive mien;
Too late their pity gave to care and skill
The hurried mind and ever-wandering will:
Unnoticed pass'd all time, and not a ray
Of reason broke on his benighted way;
But now he spurn'd the straw in pure disdain,
And now laugh'd loudly at the clinking chain.

Then, as its wrath subsided by degrees,
The mind sank slowly to infantine ease,
To playful folly, and to causeless joy,
Speech without aim, and without end, employ;
He drew fantastic figures on the wall,
And gave some wild relation of them all;
With brutal shape he join'd the human face,
And idiot smiles approved the motley race.

Harmless at length th' unhappy man was found,
The spirit settled, but the reason drown'd;
And all the dreadful tempest died away
To the dull stillness of the misty day.

And now his freedom he attain'd—if free
The lost to reason, truth, and hope, can be;
His friends, or wearied with the charge, or sure
The harmless wretch was now beyond a cure,
Gave him to wander where he pleased, and find
His own resources for the eager mind:
The playful children of the place he meets,
Playful with them he rambles through the streets;
In all they need, his stronger arm he lends,
And his lost mind to these approving friends.

That gentle Maid, whom once the Youth had loved,
Is now with mild religious pity moved;
Kindly she chides his boyish flights, while he
Will for a moment fix'd and pensive be;
And as she trembling speaks, his lively eyes
Explore her looks, he listens to her sighs;
Charm'd by her voice, th' harmonious sounds invade
His clouded mind, and for a time persuade:
Like a pleased infant, who has newly caught
From the maternal glance a gleam of thought,
He stands enrapt, the half-known voice to hear,
And starts, half conscious, at the falling tear.

Rarely from town, nor then unwatch'd, he goes,
In darker mood, as if to hide his woes;
Returning soon, he with impatience seeks
His youthful friends, and shouts, and sings, and speaks;
Speaks a wild speech with action all as wild—
The children's leader, and himself a child;
He spins their top, or, at their bidding, bends
His back, while o'er it leap his laughing friends;
Simple and weak, he acts the boy once more,
And heedless children call him *Silly Shore*.[5]

[5] [This tale contains many passages of exquisite beauty. The hero is a young man of aspiring genius and enthusiastic temper, with an ardent love of virtue, but no settled principles either of conduct or opinion. He first conceives an attachment for an amiable girl, who is captivated with his conversation; but, being too poor to marry, soon comes to spend more of his time in the family of an elderly sceptic of his acquaintance, who had recently married a young wife, and placed unbounded confidence in her virtue and the honour of his friend. In a moment of temptation they abuse this confidence. The husband renounces him with dignified composure; and he falls at once from the romantic pride of his virtue. He then seeks the company of the dissipated and gay, and ruins his health and fortune, without regaining his

TALE XII.

'SQUIRE THOMAS; OR, THE PRECIPITATE CHOICE.

Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords in twain,
Too intrinsicate t' unloose. *Lear.*

My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet,
I as a child will go by thy direction. *Richard III.*

If I do not have pity upon her, I'm a villain: If I do not love her, I am a Jew.—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

Women are soft, mild, pitiable, flexible;
But thou art obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
Henry VI.

He must be told of it, and he shall; the office
Becomes a woman best; I'll take it upon me;
If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister.
Winter's Tale.

Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness.
Twelfth Night.

'Squire Thomas flatter'd long a wealthy Aunt,
Who left him all that she could give or grant;
Ten years he tried, with all his craft and skill,
To fix the sovereign lady's varying will;
Ten years enduring at her board to sit,
He meekly listen'd to her tales and wit:
He took the meanest office man can take,
And his aunt's vices for her money's sake:
By many a threat'ning hint she waked his fear,
And he was pain'd to see a rival near:
Yet all the taunts of her contemptuous pride
He bore, nor found his grov'ling spirit tried;
Nay, when she wish'd his parents to traduce,
Fawning he smiled, and justice call'd th' abuse:
"They taught you nothing: are you not, at best,"
Said the proud Dame, "a trifler, and a jest?
"Confess you are a fool!"—he bow'd and he confess'd.

This vex'd him much, but could not always last:
The dame is buried, and the trial past.

There was a female, who had courted long
Her cousin's gifts, and deeply felt the wrong;
By a vain boy forbidden to attend
The private councils of her wealthy friend,
She vow'd revenge, nor should that crafty boy
In triumph undisturb'd his spoils enjoy:
He heard, he smiled, and when the Will was read,
Kindly dismiss'd the Kindred of the dead;
"The dear deceased" he call'd her, and the crowd
Moved off with curses deep and threat'nings loud.

The youth retired, and, with a mind at ease,
Found he was rich, and fancied he must please:
He might have pleased, and to his comfort found
The wife he wish'd, if he had sought around;
For there were lasses of his own degree,
With no more hatred to the state than he;
But he had courted spleen and age so long,
His heart refused to woo the fair and young;
So long attended on caprice and whim,
He thought attention now was due to him;
And as his flattery pleased the wealthy Dame,
Heir to the wealth, he might the flattery claim:
But this the fair, with one accord, denied,
Nor waved for man's caprice the sex's pride.
There is a season when to them is due
Worship and awe, and they will claim it too:
"Fathers," they cry, "long hold us in their chain,
"Nay, tyrant brothers claim a right to reign;
"Uncles and guardians we in turn obey,
"And husbands rule with ever-during sway;
"Short is the time when lovers at the feet
"Of beauty kneel, and own the slavery sweet;
"And shall we this our triumph, this the aim
"And boast of female power, forbear to claim?
"No! we demand that homage, that respect,
"Or the proud rebel punish and reject."

Our Hero, still too indolent, too nice,
To pay for beauty the accustom'd price,
No less forbore t' address the humbler maid,
Who might have yielded with the price unpaid;
But lived, himself to humour and to please,
To count his money, and enjoy his ease.

It pleased a neighbouring 'squire to recommend
A faithful youth as servant to his friend;
Nay, more than servant, whom he praised for parts
Ductile yet strong, and for the best of hearts:
One who might ease him in his small affairs,
With tenants, tradesmen, taxes, and repairs;
Answer his letters, look to all his dues,
And entertain him with discourse and news.

The 'Squire believed, and found the trusted youth
A very pattern for his care and truth;
Not for his virtues to be praised alone,
But for a modest mien and humble tone;
Assenting always, but as if he meant
Only to strength of reasons to assent:
For was he stubborn, and retain'd his doubt,
Till the more subtle 'Squire had forced it out;

tranquillity. When in gaol and miserable he is relieved by an unknown hand, and traces the benefaction to the friend whose former kindness he had so ill repaid. This humiliation falls upon his proud spirit and shattered nerves with an overwhelming force, and his reason fails beneath it. He is for some time a raving maniac, and then falls into a state of gay and compassionable imbecility, which is described with inimitable beauty in the close of this story. The ultimate downfall of this lofty mind, with its agonising gleams of transitory recollection, form a picture, than which we do not know if the whole range of our poetry, rich as it is in representations of disordered intellect, furnishes anything more touching, or delineated with more truth and delicacy.—Jeffrey.]

Nay, still was right, but he perceived that strong
And powerful minds could make the right the
wrong.

When the 'Squire's thoughts on some fair damsel
dwelt,
The faithful Friend his apprehensions felt;
It would rejoice his faithful heart to find
A lady suited to his master's mind;
But who deserved that master? who would prove
That hers was pure, uninterested love?
Although a servant, he would scorn to take
A countess, till she suffer'd for his sake;
Some tender spirit, humble, faithful, true,
Such, my dear master! must be sought for you.

Six months had pass'd, and not a lady seen,
With just this love, 'twixt fifty and fifteen;
All seem'd his doctrine or his pride to shun,
All would be woo'd before they would be won;
When the chance naming of a race and fair
Our 'Squire disposed to take his pleasure there,
The Friend profess'd, "although he first began
"To hint the thing, it seem'd a thoughtless plan;
"The roads, he fear'd, were foul, the days were
short,
"The village far, and yet there might be sport."

"What! you of roads and starless nights afraid?
"You think to govern! you to be obey'd!"
Smiling he spoke: the humble Friend declared
His soul's obedience, and to go prepared.

The place was distant, but with great delight
They saw a race, and hail'd the glorious sight:
The 'Squire exulted, and declared the ride
Had amply paid, and he was satisfied.
They gazed, they feasted, and, in happy mood,
Homeward return'd, and hastening as they rode;
For short the day, and sudden was the change
From light to darkness, and the way was strange:
Our hero soon grew peevish, then distress'd;
He dreaded darkness, and he sigh'd for rest:
Going, they pass'd a village; but, alas!
Returning saw no village to repass;
The 'Squire remember'd too a noble hall,
Large as a church, and whiter than its wall:
This he had noticed as they rode along,
And justly reason'd that their road was wrong.
George, full of awe, was modest in reply—
"The fault was his, 't was folly to deny;
"And of his master's safety were he sure,
"There was no grievance he would not endure."
This made his peace with the relenting 'Squire,
Whose thoughts yet dwelt on supper and a fire;
When, as they reach'd a long and pleasant green,
Dwellings of men, and next a man, were seen.

"My friend," said George, "to travellers
astray
"Point out an inn, and guide us on the way."

The man look'd up; "Surprising! can it be
"My master's son? as I 'm alive, 't is he!"

"How! Robin?" George replied, "and are we near
"My father's house? how strangely things ap-
pear!—
"Dear sir, though wanderers, we at last are
right:
"Let us proceed, and glad my father's sight:
"We shall at least be fairly lodged and fed,
"I can ensure a supper and a bed;
"Let us this night as one of pleasure date,
"And of surprise: it is an act of Fate."
"Go on," the 'Squire in happy temper cried;
"I like such blunder! I approve such guide."

They ride, they halt, the Farmer comes in haste,
Then tells his wife how much their house is graced;
They bless the chance, they praise the lucky son,
That caused the error—Nay! it was not one,
But their good fortune: cheerful grew the 'Squire,
Who found dependants, flattery, wine, and fire;
He heard the jack turn round; the busy dame
Produced her damask; and with supper came
The Daughter, dress'd with care, and full of maiden
shame.

Surprised, our hero saw the air and dress,
And strove his admiration to express;
Nay! felt it too—for *Harriot* was in truth
A tall fair beauty in the bloom of youth;
And from the pleasure and surprise, a grace
Adorn'd the blooming damsel's form and face;
Then, too, such high respect and duty paid
By all—such silent reverence in the maid;
Vent'ring with caution, yet with haste, a glance,
Loth to retire, yet trembling to advance,
Appear'd the nymph, and in her gentle guest
Stirr'd soft emotions till the hour of rest:
Sweet was his sleep, and in the morn again
He felt a mixture of delight and pain:
"How fair, how gentle," said the 'Squire, "how
meek,
"And yet how sprightly, when disposed to speak!
"Nature has bless'd her form, and Heaven her
mind,
"But in her favours Fortune is unkind;
"Poor is the maid—nay, poor she cannot prove
"Who is enrich'd with beauty, worth, and love."

The 'Squire arose, with no precise intent
To go or stay—uncertain what he meant:
He moved to part—they begg'd him first to dine;
And who could then escape from Love and Wine?
As came the night, more charming grew the Fair,
And seem'd to watch him with a twofold care:
On the third morn, resolving not to stay,
Though urged by Love, he bravely rode away.

Arrived at home, three pensive days he gave
To feelings fond and meditations grave;
Lovely she was, and, if he did not err,
As fond of him as his fond heart of her;
Still he delay'd, unable to decide,
Which was the master-passion, Love or Pride:
He sometimes wonder'd how his friend could make,
And then exulted in, the night's mistake;
Had she but fortune, "Doubtless then," he cried,
"Some happier man had won the wealthy bride."

While thus he hung in balance, now inclined
To change his state, and then to change his mind,
That careless George dropp'd idly on the ground
A letter, which his crafty master found;

The stupid youth confess'd his fault, and pray'd
The generous 'Squire to spare a gentle maid,
Of whom her tender mother, full of fears,
Had written much—"She caught her oft in tears,
"For ever thinking on a youth above
"Her humble fortune—still she own'd not love;
"Nor can define, dear girl! the cherish'd pain,
"But would rejoice to see the cause again:
"That neighbouring youth, whom she endured before,
"She now rejects, and will behold no more;
"Raised by her passion, she no longer stoops
"To her own equals, but she pines and droops,
"Like to a lily, on whose sweets the sun
"Has withering gazed—she saw and was undone:
"His wealth allured her not—nor was she moved
"By his superior state, himself she loved;
"So mild, so good, so gracious, so genteel,—
"But spare your sister, and her love conceal;
"We must the fault forgive, since she the pain must feel."

"Fault!" said the 'Squire, "there 's coarseness in the mind
"That thus conceives of feelings so refined;
"Here end my doubts, nor blame yourself, my friend,
"Fate made you careless—here my doubts have end."

The way is plain before us—there is now
The Lover's visit first, and then the vow,
Mutual and fond, the marriage-rite, the Bride
Brought to her home with all a husband's pride:
The 'Squire receives the prize his merits won,
And the glad parents leave the patron-son.

But in short time he saw, with much surprise,
First gloom, then grief, and then resentment rise,
From proud, commanding frowns, and anger-darting eyes:
"Is there in Harriot's humble mind this fire,
"This fierce impatience?" ask'd the puzzled 'Squire;
"Has marriage changed her? or the mask she wore
"Has she thrown by, and is herself once more?"

Hour after hour, when clouds on clouds appear,
Dark and more dark, we know the tempest near;
And thus the frowning brow, the restless form,
And threat'ning glance, forerun domestic storm:
So read the Husband, and, with troubled mind,
Reveal'd his fears—"My Love, I hope you find
"All here is pleasant—but I must confess
"You seem offended, or in some distress:
"Explain the grief you feel, and leave me to redress."

"Leave it to you?" replied the Nymph—"indeed!
"What! to the cause from whence the ills proceed?
"Good Heaven! to take me from a place where I
"Had every comfort underneath the sky;
"And then immure me in a gloomy place,
"With the grim monsters of your ugly race,
"That, from their canvas staring, make me dread
"Through the dark chambers, where they hang, to tread!
"No friend nor neighbour comes to give that joy
"Which all things here must banish or destroy.
"Where is the promised coach? the pleasant ride?
"Oh! what a fortune has a Farmer's bride!
"Your sordid pride has placed me just above
"Your hired domestics—and what pays me? Love!
"A selfish fondness I endure each hour,
"And share unwitness'd pomp, unenvied power.
"I hear your folly, smile at your parade,
"And see your favourite dishes duly made;
"Then am I richly dress'd for you t' admire,
"Such is my duty and my Lord's desire:
"Is this a life for youth, for health, for joy?
"Are these my duties—this my base employ?
"No! to my father's house will I repair,
"And make your idle wealth support me there.
"Was it your wish to have an humble bride,
"For bondage thankful? Curse upon your pride!
"Was it a slave you wanted? You shall see,
"That, if not happy, I at least am free:
"Well, sir! your answer."—Silent stood the 'Squire,
As looks a miser at his house on fire;
Where all he deems is vanish'd in that flame,
Swept from the earth his substance and his name:
So, lost to every promised joy of life,
Our 'Squire stood gaping at his angry wife;—
His fate, his ruin, where he saw it vain
To hope for peace, pray, threaten, or complain;
And thus, betwixt his wonder at the ill
And his despair, there stood he gaping still.

"Your answer, sir!—Shall I depart a spot
"I thus detest?"—"Oh, miserable lot!"
Exclaim'd the man. "Go, serpent! nor remain
"To sharpen woe by insult and disdain:
"A nest of harpies was I doom'd to meet;
"What plots, what combinations of deceit!
"I see it now—all plann'd, design'd, contrived;
"Served by that villain—by this fury wived—
"What fate is mine! What wisdom, virtue, truth,
"Can stand, if demons set their traps for youth?
"He lose his way? vile dog! he cannot lose
"The way a villain through his life pursues;
"And thou, deceiver! thou afraid to move,
"And hiding close the serpent in the dove!
"I saw—but, fated to endure disgrace,
"Unheeding saw—the fury in thy face,
"And call'd it spirit. Oh! I might have found
"Fraud and imposture all the kindred round!
"A nest of vipers"——

"Sir, I 'll not admit
"These wild effusions of your angry wit:
"Have you that value, that we all should use
"Such mighty arts for such important views?
"Are you such prize—and is my state so fair,
"That they should sell their souls to get me there?
"Think you that we alone our thoughts disguise?
"When, in pursuit of some contended prize,
"Mask we alone the heart, and soothe whom we despise?
"Speak you of craft and subtle schemes, who know
"That all your wealth you to deception owe;

" Who play'd for ten dull years a scoundrel part,
" To worm yourself into a Widow's heart?
" Now, when you guarded, with superior skill,
" That lady's closet, and preserved her Will,
" Blind in your craft, you saw not one of those
" Opposed by you might you in turn oppose,
" Or watch your motions, and by art obtain
" Share of that wealth you gave your peace to gain.
" Did conscience never"——

" Cease, tormentor, cease—
" Or reach me poison;—let me rest in peace!"

" Agreed—but hear me—let the truth appear."—
" Then state your purpose—I'll be calm and hear."
" Know then, this wealth, sole object of your care,
" I had some right, without your hand, to share;
" My mother's claim was just—but soon she saw
" Your power, compell'd, insulted, to withdraw:
" 'T was then my father, in his anger, swore
" You should divide the fortune, or restore.
" Long we debated—and you find me now
" Heroic victim to a father's vow;
" Like Jephtha's daughter, but in different state,
" And both decreed to mourn our early fate;
" Hence was my brother servant to your pride,
" Vengeance made him your slave, and me your bride.
" Now all is known—a dreadful price I pay
" For our revenge—but still we have our day:
" All that you love you must with others share,
" Or all you dread from their resentment dare:—
" Yet terms I offer—let contention cease;
" Divide the spoil, and let us part in peace."

Our Hero trembling heard—he sat—he rose—
Nor could his motions nor his mind compose;
He paced the room—and, stalking to her side,
Gazed on the face of his undaunted bride,
And nothing there but scorn and calm aversion spied.
He would have vengeance, yet he fear'd the law;
Her friends would threaten, and their power he saw;
" Then let her go:" but, oh! a mighty sum
Would that demand, since he had let her come;
Nor from his sorrows could he find redress,
Save that which led him to a like distress;
And all his ease was in his wife to see
A wretch as anxious and distress'd as he:
Her strongest wish, the fortune to divide,
And part in peace, his avarice denied;
And thus it happen'd, as in all deceit,
The cheater found the evil of the cheat;
The Husband griev'd—nor was the Wife at rest;
Him she could vex, and he could her molest;
She could his passion into frenzy raise,
But, when the fire was kindled, fear'd the blaze;
As much they studied, so in time they found
The easiest way to give the deepest wound;
But then, like fencers, they were equal still,—
Both lost in danger what they gain'd in skill;
Each heart a keener kind of rancour gain'd,
And, paining more, was more severely pain'd;
And thus by both was equal vengeance dealt
And both the anguish they inflicted felt.[1]

TALE XIII.

JESSE AND COLIN.

Then she plots, *then* she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect.
Merry Wives of Windsor.

She hath spoken that she should not, I am sure of that; Heaven knows what she hath known.—*Macbeth.*

Our house is hell, and thou a merry devil.
Merchant of Venice.

And yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit of too much, as they that starve with nothing; it is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.
Merchant of Venice.

A Vicar died and left his Daughter poor—
It hurt her not, she was not rich before:
Her humble share of worldly goods she sold,
Paid every debt, and then her fortune told;
And found, with youth and beauty, hope and health,
Two hundred guineas was her worldly wealth;
It then remain'd to choose her path in life,
And first, said *Jesse*, " Shall I be a wife?—
" *Colin* is mild and civil, kind and just,
" I know his love, his temper I can trust;
" But small his farm, it asks perpetual care,
" And we must toil as well as trouble share:
" True, he was taught in all the gentle arts
" That raise the soul and soften human hearts;
" And boasts a parent, who deserves to shine
" In higher class, and I could wish her mine;
" Nor wants he will his station to improve,
" A just ambition waked by faithful love;
" Still is he poor—and here my Father's Friend
" Deigns for his Daughter, as her own, to send:
" A worthy lady, who it seems has known
" A world of griefs and troubles of her own:

[1] [In 'Squire Thomas' we have the history of a mean domineering spirit, who, having secured the succession of a rich relation by assiduous flattery, looks about for some obsequious and yielding fair one, from whom he may exact homage in his turn. He thinks he has found such a one in a lowly damsel in his neighbourhood, and marries her without much premeditation; when he discovers, to his consternation, not only that she has the spirit of a virago, but that she and her family have decoyed him into the match, to revenge or indemnify themselves for his having run away with the whole inheritance of their common relative. She hopes to bully him into a separate maintenance; but his avarice refuses to buy his peace at such a price; and they continue to live together on a very successful system of mutual tormenting.—Jeffrey.]

" I was an infant when she came a guest
" Beneath my father's humble roof to rest;
" Her kindred all unfeeling, vast her woes,
" Such her complaint, and there she found repose;
" Enrich'd by fortune, now she nobly lives,
" And nobly, from the bless'd abundance, gives;
" The grief, the want, of human life, she knows,
" And comfort there and here relief bestows:
" But are they not dependants?—Foolish pride!
" Am I not honour'd by such friend and guide?
" Have I a home" (here Jesse dropp'd a tear),
" Or friend beside?"—A faithful friend was near.

Now Colin came, at length resolved to lay
His heart before her, and to urge her stay:
True, his own plough the gentle Colin drove,
An humble farmer with aspiring love;
Who, urged by passion, never dared till now,
Thus urged by fears, his trembling hopes avow:
Her father's glebe he managed; every year
The grateful Vicar held the youth more dear;
He saw indeed the prize in Colin's view,
And wish'd his Jesse with a man so true:
Timid as true, he urged with anxious air
His tender hope, and made the trembling prayer;
When Jesse saw, nor could with coldness see,
Such fond respect, such tried sincerity;
Grateful for favours to her father dealt,
She more than grateful for his passion felt;
Nor could she frown on one so good and kind,
Yet fear'd to smile, and was unfix'd in mind;
But prudence placed the Female Friend in view—
What might not one so rich and grateful do?
So lately, too, the good old Vicar died,
His faithful daughter must not cast aside
The signs of filial grief, and be a ready bride.
Thus, led by prudence, to the Lady's seat
The Village-Beauty purposed to retreat;
But, as in hard-fought fields the victor knows
What to the vanquish'd he in honour owes,
So, in this conquest over powerful love,
Prudence resolved a generous foe to prove;
And Jesse felt a mingled fear and pain
In her dismission of a faithful swain,
Gave her kind thanks, and when she saw his woe,
Kindly betray'd that she was loth to go;
" But would she promise, *if* abroad she met
" A frowning world, she would remember yet
" Where dwelt a friend?"—" That could she not forget."
And thus they parted; but each faithful heart
Felt the compulsion, and refused to part.

Now, by the morning mail the timid Maid
Was to that kind and wealthy Dame convey'd;
Whose invitation, when her father died,
Jesse as comfort to her heart applied;
She knew the days her generous Friend had seen—
As wife and widow, evil days had been;
She married early, and for half her life
Was an insulted and forsaken wife;
Widow'd and poor, her angry father gave,
Mix'd with reproach, the pittance of a slave;
Forgetful brothers pass'd her, but she knew
Her humbler friends, and to their home withdrew:
The good old Vicar to her sire applied
For help, and help'd her when her sire denied.

When in few years Death stalk'd through bower and hall,
Sires, sons, and sons of sons, were buried all,
She then abounded, and had wealth to spare
For softening grief she once was doom'd to share;
Thus train'd in misery's school, and taught to feel,
She would rejoice an orphan's woes to heal:—
So Jesse thought, who look'd within her breast,
And thence conceived how bounteous minds are bless'd.

From her vast mansion look'd the Lady down
On humbler buildings of a busy town;
Thence came her friends of either sex, and all
With whom she lived on terms reciprocal:
They pass'd the hours with their accustom'd ease,
As guests inclined, but not compell'd, to please;
But there were others in the mansion found,
For office chosen, and by duties bound;
Three female rivals, each of power possess'd,
Th' attendant Maid, poor Friend, and kindred Guest.

To these came Jesse, as a seaman thrown
By the rude storm upon a coast unknown:
The view was flattering, civil seem'd the race,
But all unknown the dangers of the place.

Few hours had pass'd, when, from attendants freed,
The Lady utter'd, "This is kind indeed;
" Believe me, love! that I for one like you
" Have daily pray'd, a friend discreet and true;
" Oh! wonder not that I on you depend,
" You are mine own hereditary friend:
" Hearken, my Jesse, never can I trust
" Beings ungrateful, selfish, and unjust;
" But you are present, and my load of care
" Your love will serve to lighten and to share:
" Come near me, Jesse—let not those below
" Of my reliance on your friendship know;
" Look as they look, be in their freedoms free—
" But all they say do you convey to me."

Here Jesse's thoughts to Colin's cottage flew,
And with such speed she scarce their absence knew.

" Jane loves her mistress, and should she depart,
" I lose her service, and she breaks her heart;
" My ways and wishes, looks and thoughts, she knows,
" And duteous care by close attention shows:
" But is she faithful? in temptation strong,
" Will she not wrong me? ah! I fear the wrong;
" Your father loved me; now, in time of need,
" Watch for my good, and to his place succeed.

" Blood does n't bind—that Girl, who every day
" Eats of my bread, would wish my life away;
" I am her *dear relation*, and she thinks
" To make her fortune, an ambitious minx!
" She only courts me for the prospect's sake,
" Because she knows I have a Will to make:
" Yes, love! my Will delay'd, I know not how—
" But you are here, and I will make it now.

"That idle creature, keep her in your view,
"See what she does, what she desires to do;
"On her young mind may artful villains prey,
"And to my plate and jewels find a way:
"A pleasant humour has the girl; her smile,
"And cheerful manner, tedious hours beguile:
"But well observe her, ever near her be,
"Close in your thoughts, in your professions free.

"Again, my Jesse, hear what I advise,
"And watch a woman ever in disguise;
"*Issop*, that widow, serious, subtle, sly—
"But what of this?—I must have company:
"She markets for me, and although she makes
"Profit, no doubt, of all she undertakes,
"Yet she is one I can to all produce,
"And all her talents are in daily use:
"Deprived of her, I may another find
"As sly and selfish, with a weaker mind:
"But never trust her, she is full of art,
"And worms herself into the closest heart;
"Seem then, I pray you, careless in her sight,
"Nor let her know, my love, how we unite.

"Do, my good Jesse, cast a view around,
"And let no wrong within my house be found;
"That Girl associates with—— I know not who
"Are her companions, nor what ill they do;
"'T is then the Widow plans, 't is then she tries
"Her various arts and schemes for fresh supplies:
"'T is then, if ever, *Jane* her duty quits,
"And, whom I know not, favours and admits:
"Oh! watch their movements all; for me 't is hard,
"Indeed is vain, but you may keep a guard;
"And I, when none your watchful glance deceive,
"May make my Will, and think what I shall leave."

Jesse, with fear, disgust, alarm, surprise,
Heard of these duties for her ears and eyes;
Heard by what service she must gain her bread,
And went with scorn and sorrow to her bed.

Jane was a servant fitted for her place,
Experienced, cunning, fraudful, selfish, base;
Skill'd in those mean humiliating arts
That make their way to proud and selfish hearts:
By instinct taught, she felt an awe, a fear,
For Jesse's upright, simple character;
Whom with gross flattery she a while assail'd,
And then beheld with hatred when it fail'd;
Yet, trying still upon her mind for hold,
She all the secrets of the mansion told;
And, to invite an equal trust, she drew
Of every mind a bold and rapid view;
But on the widow'd Friend with deep disdain,
And rancorous envy, dwelt the treacherous Jane:
In vain such arts;—without deceit or pride,
With a just taste and feeling for her guide,
From all contagion Jesse kept apart,
Free in her manners, guarded in her heart.

Jesse one morn was thoughtful, and her sigh
The Widow heard as she was passing by;
And—"Well!" she said, "is that some distant swain,
"Or aught with us, that gives your bosom pain?

"Come, we are fellow-sufferers, slaves in thrall,
"And tasks and griefs are common to us all;
"Think not my frankness strange: they love to paint
"Their state with freedom, who endure restraint;
"And there is something in that speaking eye
"And sober mien that prove I may rely:
"You came a stranger; to my words attend,
"Accept my offer, and you find a friend;
"It is a labyrinth in which you stray,
"Come, hold my clue, and I will lead the way.

"Good Heav'n! that one so jealous, envious, base,
"Should be the mistress of so sweet a place;
"She, who so long herself was low and poor,
"Now broods suspicious on her useless store;
"She loves to see us abject, loves to deal
"Her insult round, and then pretends to feel:
"Prepare to cast all dignity aside,
"For know, your talents will be quickly tried;
"Nor think, from favours past, a friend to gain,—
"'T is but by duties we our posts maintain:
"I read her novels, gossip through the town,
"And daily go, for idle stories, down;
"I cheapen all she buys, and bear the curse
"Of honest tradesmen for my niggard purse;
"And, when for her this meanness I display,
"She cries, 'I heed not what I throw away;'
"Of secret bargains I endure the shame,
"And stake my credit for our fish and game;
"Oft has she smiled to hear 'her generous soul
"'Would gladly give, but stoops to my control:'
"Nay! I have heard her, when she chanced to come
"Where I contended for a petty sum,
"Affirm 't was painful to behold such care,
"'But Issop's nature is to pinch and spare:'
"Thus all the meanness of the house is mine,
"And my reward—to scorn her, and to dine.

"See next that giddy thing, with neither pride
"To keep her safe, nor principle to guide:
"Poor, idle, simple flirt! as sure as fate
"Her maiden-fame will have an early date:
"Of her beware; for all who live below
"Have faults they wish not all the world to know;
"And she is fond of listening, full of doubt,
"And stoops to guilt to find an error out.

"And now once more observe the artful Maid,
"A lying, prying, jilting, thievish jade;
"I think, my love, you would not condescend
"To call a low, illiterate girl your friend:
"But in our troubles we are apt, you know,
"To lean on all who some compassion show;
"And she has flexile features, acting eyes,
"And seems with every look to sympathise;
"No mirror can a mortal's grief express
"With more precision, or can feel it less;
"That proud, mean spirit, she by fawning courts
"By vulgar flattery, and by vile reports;
"And by that proof she every instant gives
"To one so mean, that yet a meaner lives.

"Come, I have drawn the curtain, and you see
"Your fellow-actors, all our company;

" Should you incline to throw reserve aside,
" And in my judgment and my love confide,
" I could some prospects open to your view,
" That ask attention—and, till then, adieu."

" Farewell!" said Jesse, hastening to her room,
Where all she saw within, without, was gloom:
Confused, perplex'd, she pass'd a dreary hour,
Before her reason could exert its power;
To her all seem'd mysterious, all allied
To avarice, meanness, folly, craft, and pride;
Wearied with thought, she breathed the garden's air,
Then came the laughing Lass, and join'd her there.

" My sweetest friend has dwelt with us a week,
" And does she love us? be sincere and speak;
" My Aunt you cannot—Lord! how I should hate
" To be like her, all misery and state;
" Proud, and yet envious, she disgusted sees
" All who are happy, and who look at ease.
" Let friendship bind us, I will quickly show
" Some favourites near us you'll be bless'd to know;
" My aunt forbids it—but, can she expect,
" To soothe her spleen, we shall ourselves neglect?
" Jane and the Widow were to watch and stay
" My free-born feet; I watch'd as well as they:
" Lo! what is this?—this simple key explores
" The dark recess that holds the Spinster's stores:
" And, led by her ill star, I chanced to see
" Where Issop keeps her stock of ratafie;
" Used in the hours of anger and alarm,
" It makes her civil, and it keeps her warm:
" Thus bless'd with secrets both would choose to hide,
" Their fears now grant me what their scorn denied.

" My freedom thus by their assent secured,
" Bad as it is, the place may be endured;
" And bad it is, but her estates, you know,
" And her beloved hoards, she must bestow;
" So we can slily our amusements take,
" And friends of demons, if they help us, make."

" Strange creatures these," thought Jesse, half inclined
To smile at one malicious and yet kind;
Frank and yet cunning, with a heart to love
And malice prompt—the serpent and the dove;
Here could she dwell? or could she yet depart?
Could she be artful? could she bear with art?—
This splendid mansion gave the cottage grace,
She thought a dungeon was a happier place;
And Colin pleading, when he pleaded best,
Wrought not such sudden change in Jesse's breast.

The wondering maiden, who had only read
Of such vile beings, saw them now with dread;
Safe in themselves—for nature has design'd
The creature's poison harmless to the kind;
But all beside who in the haunts are found
Must dread the poison, and must feel the wound.

Days full of care, slow weary weeks pass'd on,
Eager to go, still Jesse was not gone;
Her time in trifling, or in tears, she spent,
She never gave, she never felt, content:
The Lady wonder'd that her humble guest
Strove not to please, would neither lie nor jest;
She sought no news, no scandal would convey,
But walk'd for health, and was at church to pray:
All this displeased, and soon the Widow cried,
" Let me be frank—I am not satisfied;
" You know my wishes, I your judgment trust;
" You can be useful, Jesse, and you must;
" Let me be plainer, child—I want an ear,
" When I am deaf, instead of mine to hear;
" When mine is sleeping, let your eye awake;
" When I observe not, observation take:
" Alas! I rest not on my pillow laid,
" Then threat'ning whispers make my soul afraid;
" The tread of strangers to my ear ascends,
" Fed at my cost, the minions of my friends;
" While you, without a care, a wish to please,
" Eat the vile bread of idleness and ease."

Th' indignant Girl, astonish'd, answer'd—" Nay!
" This instant, madam, let me haste away:
" Thus speaks my father's, thus an orphan's friend?
" This instant, lady, let your bounty end."

The Lady frown'd indignant—" What!" she cried,
" A vicar's daughter with a princess' pride
" And pauper's lot! but pitying I forgive;
" How, simple Jesse, do you think to live?
" Have I not power to help you, foolish maid?
" To my concerns be your attention paid;
" With cheerful mind th' allotted duties take,
" And recollect I have a Will to make."

Jesse, who felt as liberal natures feel,
When thus the baser their designs reveal,
Replied—" Those duties were to her unfit,
" Nor would her spirit to her tasks submit."

In silent scorn the Lady sat awhile,
And then replied with stern contemptuous smile—

" Think you, fair madam, that you came to share
" Fortunes like mine without a thought or care?
" A guest, indeed! from every trouble free,
" Dress'd by my help, with not a care for me;
" When I a visit to your father made,
" I for the poor assistance largely paid;
" To his domestics I their tasks assign'd,
" I fix'd the portion for his hungry hind;
" And had your father (simple man!) obey'd
" My good advice, and watch'd as well as pray'd,
" He might have left you something with his prayers,
" And lent some colour for these lofty airs.—

" In tears, my love! Oh, then my soften'd heart
" Cannot resist—we never more will part;
" I need your friendship—I will be your friend,
" And, thus determined, to my Will attend."

Jesse went forth, but with determined soul
To fly such love, to break from such control:
" I hear enough," the trembling damsel cried;
" Flight be my care, and Providence my guide:

" Ere yet a prisoner, I escape will make;
" Will, thus display'd, th' insidious arts forsake,
" And, as the rattle sounds, will fly the fatal snake."

Jesse her thanks upon the morrow paid,
Prepared to go, determined though afraid.

" Ungrateful creature!" said the Lady, " this
" Could I imagine?—are you frantic, miss?
" What! leave your friend, your prospects—is it true?"
This Jesse answer'd by a mild " Adieu!"

The Dame replied, " Then houseless may you rove,
" The starving victim to a guilty love;
" Branded with shame, in sickness doom'd to nurse
" An ill-form'd cub, your scandal and your curse;
" Spurn'd by its scoundrel father, and ill fed
" By surly rustics with the parish-bread!—
" Relent you not?—speak—yet I can forgive;
" Still live with me."—" With you," said Jesse, " live?
" No! I would first endure what you describe,
" Rather than breathe with your detested tribe;
" Who long have feign'd, till now their very hearts
" Are firmly fix'd in their accursed parts;
" Who all profess esteem, and feel disdain,
" And all, with justice, of deceit complain;
" Whom I could pity, but that, while I stay,
" My terror drives all kinder thoughts away;
" Grateful for this, that, when I think of you,
" I little fear what poverty can do."

The angry matron her attendant Jane
Summon'd in haste to soothe the fierce disdain:—

" A vile detested wretch!" the Lady cried,
" Yet shall she be by many an effort tried,
" And, clogg'd with debt and fear, against her will abide;
" And, once secured, she never shall depart
" Till I have proved the firmness of her heart:
" Then when she dares not, would not, cannot go,
" I'll make her feel what 't is to use me so."

The pensive Colin in his garden stray'd,
But felt not then the beauties it display'd;
There many a pleasant object met his view,
A rising wood of oaks behind it grew;
A stream ran by it, and the village-green
And public road were from the garden seen;
Save where the pine and larch the bound'ry made,
And on the rose-beds threw a softening shade.

The Mother sat beside the garden-door,
Dress'd as in times ere she and hers were poor;
The broad-laced cap was known in ancient days,
When madam's dress compell'd the village praise;
And still she look'd as in the times of old,
Ere his last farm the erring husband sold;
While yet the mansion stood in decent state,
And paupers waited at the well-known gate.

" Alas, my son!" the Mother cried, " and why
" That silent grief and oft-repeated sigh?
" True we are poor, but thou hast never felt
" Pangs to thy father for his error dealt;
" Pangs from strong hopes of visionary gain,
" For ever raised, and ever found in vain.
" He rose unhappy from his fruitless schemes,
" As guilty wretches from their blissful dreams;
" But thou wert then, my son, a playful child,
" Wondering at grief, gay, innocent, and wild;
" Listening at times to thy poor mother's sighs
" With curious looks and innocent surprise;
" Thy father dying, thou, my virtuous boy,
" My comfort always, waked my soul to joy;
" With the poor remnant of our fortune left,
" Thou hast our station of its gloom bereft:
" Thy lively temper, and thy cheerful air,
" Have cast a smile on sadness and despair;
" Thy active hand has dealt to this poor space
" The bliss of plenty and the charm of grace;
" And all around us wonder when they find
" Such taste and strength, such skill and power combined;
" There is no mother, Colin, no not one,
" But envies me so kind, so good a son;
" By thee supported on this failing side,
" Weakness itself awakes a parent's pride:
" I bless the stroke that was my grief before,
" And feel such joy that 't is disease no more;
" Shielded by thee, my want becomes my wealth,
" And, soothed by Colin, sickness smiles at health;
" The old men love thee, they repeat thy praise,
" And say, like thee were youth in earlier days;
" While every village-maiden cries, 'How gay,
" 'How smart, how brave, how good is Colin Grey!'

" Yet art thou sad; alas! my son, I know
" Thy heart is wounded, and the cure is slow;
" Fain would I think that Jesse still may come
" To share the comforts of our rustic home:
" She surely loved thee; I have seen the maid,
" When thou hast kindly brought the Vicar aid—
" When thou hast eased his bosom of its pain,
" Oh! I have seen her—she will come again."

The Matron ceased; and Colin stood the while
Silent, but striving for a grateful smile;
He then replied—" Ah! sure, had Jesse stay'd,
" And shared the comforts of our sylvan shade,
" The tenderest duty and the fondest love
" Would not have fail'd that generous heart to move;
" A grateful pity would have ruled her breast,
" And my distresses would have made me bless'd.

" But she is gone, and ever has in view
" Grandeur and taste,—and what will then ensue?
" Surprise and then delight in scenes so fair and new;
" For many a day, perhaps for many a week,
" Home will have charms, and to her bosom speak;
" But thoughtless ease, and affluence, and pride,
" Seen day by day, will draw the heart aside:
" And she at length, though gentle and sincere,
" Will think no more of our enjoyments here."

Sighing he spake—but hark! he hears th' approach
Of rattling wheels! and, lo! the evening coach;

Once more the movement of the horses' feet
Makes the fond heart with strong emotion beat:
Faint were his hopes, but ever had the sight
Drawn him to gaze beside his gate at night;
And when with rapid wheels it hurried by,
He grieved his parent with a hopeless sigh;
And could the blessing have been bought—what sum
Had he not offer'd to have Jesse come!

She came—he saw her bending from the door,
Her face, her smile, and he beheld no more;
Lost in his joy—the mother lent her aid
T' assist and to detain the willing Maid;
Who thought her late, her present home to make,
Sure of a welcome for the Vicar's sake:
But the good parent was so pleased, so kind,
So pressing Colin, she so much inclined,
That night advanced; and then, so long detain'd,
No wishes to depart she felt, or feign'd;
Yet long in doubt she stood, and then perforce
remain'd.

Here was a lover fond, a friend sincere;
Here was content and joy, for she was here:
In the mild evening, in the scene around,
The Maid, now free, peculiar beauties found;
Blended with village-tones, the evening gale
Gave the sweet night-bird's warblings to the vale:
The Youth, embolden'd, yet abash'd, now told
His fondest wish, nor found the maiden cold;
The Mother smiling whisper'd, "Let him go
"And seek the licence!" Jesse answer'd,
"No:"
But Colin went.—I know not if they live
With all the comforts wealth and plenty give;
But with pure joy to envious souls denied,
To suppliant meanness and suspicious pride;
And village-maids of happy couples say,
"They live like Jesse Bourn and Colin Grey." [1]

TALE XIV.

THE STRUGGLES OF CONSCIENCE.

I am a villain; yet I lie, I am not:
Fool! of thyself speak well:—Fool! do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale.
Richard III.

My conscience is but a kind of hard conscience....The fiend gives the more friendly counsel.—*Merchant of Venice.*

Thou hast it now—and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for it.—*Macbeth.*

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Rase out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart? *Macbeth.*

Soft! I did but dream.
Oh! coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
Richard III.

A SERIOUS Toyman in the city dwelt,
Who much concern for his religion felt;
Reading, he changed his tenets, read again,
And various questions could with skill maintain;
Papist and Quaker if we set aside,
He had the road of every traveller tried;
There walk'd a while, and on a sudden turn'd
Into some by-way he had just discern'd:
He had a nephew, *Fulham*:—Fulham went
His Uncle's way, with every turn content;
He saw his pious kinsman's watchful care,
And thought such anxious pains his own might spare,
And he the truth obtain'd, without the toil, might share.
In fact, young Fulham, though he little read,
Perceived his uncle was by fancy led;
And smiled to see the constant care he took,
Collating creed with creed, and book with book.

At length the senior fix'd; I pass the sect
He call'd a Church, 't was precious and elect;
Yet the seed fell not in the richest soil,
For few disciples paid the preacher's toil;
All in an attic-room were wont to meet,
These few disciples, at their pastor's feet;
With these went Fulham, who, discreet and grave,
Follow'd the light his worthy uncle gave;
Till a warm Preacher found a way t' impart
Awakening feelings to his torpid heart:

1 ["Jesse is the orphan of a poor clergyman, who goes, upon her father's death, to live with a rich old lady who had been his friend; and Colin is a young farmer, whose father had speculated away a handsome property, and who, though living in a good degree by his own labour, yet wished the damsel (who half wished it also) to remain and share his humble lot. The rich lady proves to be suspicious, overbearing, and selfish: and sets Jesse upon the ignoble duty of acting the spy and informer over the other dependants of her household; on the delineation of whose characters Mr. Crabbe has lavished a prodigious power of observation and correct description. But this not suiting her pure and ingenuous mind, she suddenly leaves the splendid mansion, and returns to her native village, where Colin and his mother soon persuade her to form one of their happy family. There is a great deal of goodheartedness in this tale, and a kind of moral beauty, which has lent more than usual elegance to the simple pictures it presents."—JEFFREY.]

Some weighty truths, and of unpleasant kind,
Sank, though resisted, in his struggling mind:
He wish'd to fly them, but, compell'd to stay,
Truth to the waking Conscience found her way;
For though the Youth was call'd a prudent lad,
And prudent was, yet serious faults he had—
Who now reflected—"Much am I surprised;
"I find these notions cannot be despised:
"No! there is something I perceive at last,
"Although my uncle cannot hold it fast;
"Though I the strictness of these men reject,
"Yet I determine to be circumspect:
"This man alarms me, and I must begin
"To look more closely to the things within:
"These sons of zeal have I derided long,
"But now begin to think the laugher's wrong:
"Nay, my good uncle, by all teachers moved,
"Will be preferr'd to him who none approved;—
"Better to love amiss than nothing to have loved."

Such were his thoughts, when Conscience first began
To hold close converse with th' awaken'd man:
He from that time reserved and cautious grew,
And for his duties felt obedience due;
Pious he was not, but he fear'd the pain
Of sins committed, nor would sin again:
Whene'er he stray'd, he found his Conscience rose,
Like one determined what was ill t' oppose,
What wrong t' accuse, what secret to disclose;
To drag forth every latent act to light,
And fix them fully in the actor's sight:
This gave him trouble, but he still confess'd
The labour useful, for it brought him rest.

The Uncle died, and when the Nephew read
The will, and saw the substance of the dead—
Five hundred guineas, with a stock in trade—
He much rejoiced, and thought his fortune made;
Yet felt aspiring pleasure at the sight,
And for increase, increasing appetite:
Desire of profit idle habits check'd
(For Fulham's virtue was to be correct);
He and his Conscience had their compact made—
"Urge me with truth, and you will soon persuade;
But not," he cried, "for mere ideal things
"Give me to feel those terror-breeding stings."

"Let not such thoughts," she said, "your mind confound;
"Trifles may wake me, but they never wound;
"In them indeed there is a wrong and right,
"But you will find me pliant and polite;
"Not like a Conscience of the dotard kind,
"Awake to dreams, to dire offences blind:
"Let all within be pure, in all beside
"Be your own master, governor, and guide;
"Alive to danger, in temptation strong,
"And I shall sleep our whole existence long."

"Sweet be thy sleep," said Fulham; "strong must be
"The tempting ill that gains access to me:
"Never will I to evil deed consent;
"Or, if surprised, oh! how will I repent!
"Should gain be doubtful, soon would I restore
"The dangerous good, or give it to the poor;
"Repose for them my growing wealth shall buy,
"Or build—who knows?—an hospital like Guy.[1]
"Yet why such means to soothe the smart within,
"While firmly purposed to renounce the sin?"

Thus our young Trader and his Conscience dwelt
In mutual love, and great the joy they felt;
But yet in small concerns, in trivial things,
"She was," he said, "too ready with the stings;"
And he too apt, in search of growing gains,
To lose the fear of penalties and pains:
Yet these were trifling bickerings, petty jars,
Domestic strifes, preliminary wars;
He ventured little, little she express'd
Of indignation, and they both had rest.

Thus was he fix'd to walk the worthy way,
When profit urged him to a bold essay:—
A time was that when all at pleasure gamed
In lottery chances, yet a law unblamed:[2]
This Fulham tried; who would to him advance
A pound or crown, he gave in turn a chance
For weighty prize—and should they nothing share,
They had their crown or pound in Fulham's ware;
Thus the old stores within the shop were sold
For that which none refuses, new or old.

Was this unjust? yet Conscience could not rest,
But made a mighty struggle in the breast,
And gave th' aspiring man an early proof
That should they war he would have work enough:
"Suppose," said she, "your vended numbers rise
"The same with those which gain each real prize,
"(Such your proposal,) can you ruin shun?"—
"A hundred thousand," he replied, "to one."
"Still it may happen."—"I the sum must pay."
"You know you cannot."—"I can run away."
"That is dishonest."—"Nay, but you must wink
"At a chance hit: it cannot be, I think.
"Upon my conduct as a whole decide,
"Such trifling errors let my virtues hide.
"Fail I at meeting? am I sleepy there?
"My purse refuse I with the priest to share?
"Do I deny the poor a helping hand?
"Or stop the wicked women in the Strand?
"Or drink at club beyond a certain pitch?
"Which are your charges? Conscience, tell me which?"

[1] ["Guy was originally a bookseller, and inhabited the house which forms the angle between Cornhill and Lombard Street. Being a single man, and very penurious, he soon began to accumulate money. He was seventy-six years of age when he formed the design of building the hospital near St. Thomas's which bears his name. The charge of erecting this vast pile amounted to 18,793*l.*, besides 219,499*l.* which he left to endow it; and he just lived to see it roofed in. He died in 1724, in his eighty-first year, after having dedicated to charitable purposes more than any other private person upon record in this kingdom."—NICHOLS.]

[2] [The first lottery was sanctioned in 1569. According to Stow it was begun to be drawn, at the west door of St. Paul's cathedral, on the 11th of January, and continued incessantly drawing, day and night, till the 6th of May. Lotteries were abolished by the legislature in 1826.]

"'T is well," said she, "but—" "Nay, I pray, have done:
"Trust me, I will not into danger run."

The lottery drawn, not one demand was made;
Fulham gain'd profit and increase of trade.
"See now," said he—for Conscience yet arose—
"How foolish 't is such measures to oppose:
"Have I not blameless thus my state advanced?"
"Still," mutter'd Conscience, "still it might have chanced."
"Might!" said our hero; "who is so exact
"As to inquire what might have been a fact?"

Now Fulham's shop contain'd a curious view
Of costly trifles elegant and new:
The papers told where kind mammas might buy
The gayest toys to charm an infant's eye;
Where generous beaux might gentle damsels please,
And travellers call who cross the land or seas,
And find the curious art, the neat device,
Of precious value and of trifling price.

Here Conscience rested, she was pleased to find
No less an active than an honest mind;
But when he named his price, and when he swore
His Conscience check'd him that he ask'd no more,
When half he sought had been a large increase
On fair demand, she could not rest in peace:
(Beside th' affront to call th' adviser in,
Who would prevent, to justify the sin:)
She therefore told him that "he vainly tried
"To soothe her anger, conscious that he lied;
"If thus he grasp'd at such usurious gains,
"He must deserve, and should expect her pains."[3]

The charge was strong; he would in part confess
Offence there was—But, who offended less?
"What! is a mere assertion call'd a lie?
"And if it be, are men compell'd to buy?
"'T was strange that Conscience on such points should dwell,
"While he was acting (he would call it) well;
"He bought as others buy, he sold as others sell;
"There was no fraud, and he demanded cause
"Why he was troubled when he kept the laws?"

"My laws!" said Conscience. "What," said he, "are thine?
"Oral or written, human or divine?
"Show me the chapter, let me see the text;
"By laws uncertain subjects are perplex'd:
"Let me my finger on the statute lay,
"And I shall feel it duty to obey."

"Reflect," said Conscience, "'t was your own desire
"That I should warn you—does the compact tire?
"Repent you this? then bid me not advise,
"And rather hear your passions as they rise:
"So you may counsel and remonstrance shun;
"But then remember it is war begun;
"And you may judge from some attacks, my friend,
"What serious conflicts will on war attend."

"Nay, but," at length the thoughtful man replied,
"I say not that; I wish you for my guide;
"Wish for your checks and your reproofs—but then
"Be like a Conscience of my fellow-men;
"Worthy I mean, and men of good report,
"And not the wretches who with Conscience sport:
"There 's Bice, my friend, who passes off his grease
"Of pigs for bears', in pots a crown apiece;
"His Conscience never checks him when he swears
"The fat he sells is honest fat of bears;
"And so it is, for he contrives to give
"A drachm to each—'t is thus that tradesmen live;
"Now why should you and I be over-nice?[4]
"What man is held in more repute than Bice?"

Here ended the dispute; but yet 't was plain
The parties both expected strife again:
Their friendship cool'd, he look'd about and saw
Numbers who seem'd unshackled by his awe;
While like a schoolboy he was threaten'd still,
Now for the deed, now only for the will:
Here Conscience answer'd, "To thy neighbour's guide
"Thy neighbour leave, and in thine own confide."

Such were each day the charges and replies,
When a new object caught the trader's eyes;
A Vestry-patriot, could he gain the name,
Would famous make him, and would pay the fame.
He knew full well the sums bequeath'd in charge
For schools, for almsmen, for the poor, were large;
Report had told, and he could feel it true,
That most unfairly dealt the trusted few;
No partners would they in their office take,
Nor clear accounts at annual meetings make.
Aloud our hero in the vestry spoke
Of hidden deeds, and vow'd to draw the cloak;
It was the poor man's cause, and he for one
Was quite determined to see justice done:
His foes affected laughter, then disdain,
They too were loud and threat'ning, but in vain;
The pauper's friend, their foe, arose and spoke again:
Fiercely he cried, "Your garbled statements show
"That you determine we shall nothing know;
"But we shall bring your hidden crimes to light,
"Give you to shame, and to the poor their right."

Virtue like this might some approval ask—
But Conscience sternly said, "You wear a mask!"
"At least," said Fulham, "if I have a view
"To serve myself, I serve the public too."

[3] ["Still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through Gain's silence, and o'er Glory's din:
Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod—
Man's conscience is the oracle of God."—Byron.]

[4] ["Why should not Conscience have vacation,
As well as other courts o' th' nation?
Have equal power to adjourn,
Appoint appearance, and return?"—Butler.]

Fulham, though check'd, retain'd his former zeal,
And this the cautious rogues began to feel:
"Thus will he ever bark," in peevish tone
An elder cried—"the cur must have a bone."
They then began to hint, and to begin
Was all they needed—it was felt within:
In terms less veil'd an offer then was made;
Though distant still, it fail'd not to persuade:
More plainly then was every point proposed,
Approved, accepted, and the bargain closed.
The exulting paupers hail'd their Friend's success,
And bade adieu to murmurs and distress.

Alas! their Friend had now superior light,
And, view'd by that, he found that all was right;
"There were no errors, the disbursements small;
"This was the truth, and truth was due to all."

And rested Conscience? No! she would not rest,
Yet was content with making a protest:
Some acts she now with less resistance bore,
Nor took alarm so quickly as before:
Like those in towns besieged, who every ball
At first with terror view, and dread them all;
But, grown familiar with the scenes, they fear
The danger less, as it approaches near;
So Conscience, more familiar with the view
Of growing evils, less attentive grew:
Yet he, who felt some pain and dreaded more,
Gave a peace-offering to the angry poor.

Thus had he quiet—but the time was brief;
From his new triumph sprang a cause of grief:
In office join'd, and acting with the rest,
He must admit the sacramental test.
Now, as a sectary, he had all his life,
As he supposed, been with the Church at strife;—
No rules of hers, no laws had he perused,
Nor knew the tenets he by rote abused;
Yet Conscience here arose more fierce and strong
Than when she told of robbery and wrong.
"Change his religion! No! he must be sure
"That was a blow no Conscience could endure."

Though friend to Virtue, yet she oft abides
In early notions, fix'd by erring guides;
And is more startled by a call from those,
Than when the foulest crimes her rest oppose:
By error taught, by prejudice misled,
She yields her rights, and Fancy rules instead;
When Conscience all her stings and terror deals,
Not as Truth dictates, but as Fancy feels:
And thus within our hero's troubled breast,
Crime was less torture than the odious test.
New forms, new measures, he must now embrace,
With sad conviction that they warr'd with grace;
To his new church no former friend would come,
They scarce preferr'd her to the church of Rome:

But thinking much, and weighing guilt and gain,
Conscience and he commuted for her pain;
Then promised Fulham to retain his creed,
And their peculiar paupers still to feed;
Their attic-room (in secret) to attend,
And not forget he was *the preacher*'s friend:
Thus he proposed, and Conscience, troubled, tried,
And wanting peace, reluctantly complied.

Now, care subdued, and apprehensions gone,
In peace our hero went aspiring on;
But short the period—soon a quarrel rose,
Fierce in the birth, and fatal in the close;
With times of truce between, which rather proved
That both were weary, than that either loved.

Fulham e'en now disliked the heavy thrall,
And for her death would in his anguish call,
As Rome's mistaken friend exclaim'd, *Let Carthage fall!*
So felt our hero, so his wish express'd,
Against this powerful sprite—*delendâ est:*
Rome in her conquest saw not danger near,
Freed from her rival and without a fear;
So, Conscience conquer'd, men perceive how free,
But not how fatal, such a state must be.
Fatal, not free, our hero's; foe or friend,
Conscience on him was destined to attend:
She dozed indeed, grew dull, nor seem'd to spy
Crime following crime, and each of deeper dye;
But all were noticed, and the reckoning time
With her account came on—crime following crime.[5]

This, once a foe, now Brother in the Trust,
Whom Fulham late described as fair and just,
Was the sole Guardian of a wealthy maid,
Placed in his power, and of his frown afraid:
Not quite an idiot, for her busy brain
Sought, by poor cunning, trifling points to gain;
Success in childish projects her delight,
She took no heed of each important right.

The friendly parties met—the Guardian cried,
"I am too old; my sons have each a bride:
"Martha, my ward, would make an easy wife;
"On easy terms I'll make her yours for life;
"And then the creature is so weak and mild,
"She may be soothed and threaten'd as a child."
"Yet not obey," said Fulham, "for your fools,
"Female and male, are obstinate as mules."

Some points adjusted, these new friends agreed,
Proposed the day, and hurried on the deed.

"'Tis a vile act," said Conscience.—"It will prove,"
Replied the bolder man, "an act of love:
"Her wicked guardian might the girl have sold
"To endless misery for a tyrant's gold;

[5] ["Nam quis
Peccandi finem posuit sibi? Quando recepit
Ejectum semel attritâ de fronte ruborem?" &c.
JUVENAL.

"Never yet
Could sinner to his sin a period set:
When did the flush of modest blood inflame
The cheek, once harden'd to the sense of shame?
Or when the offender, since the birth of time,
Retire, contented with a single crime?"
GIFFORD.]

" Now may her life be happy—for I mean
" To keep my temper even and serene."
" I cannot thus compound," the spirit cried,
" Nor have my laws thus broken and defied:
" This is a fraud, a bargain for a wife;
" Expect my vengeance, or amend your life."

The Wife was pretty, trifling, childish, weak;
She could not think, but would not cease to speak:
This he forbade—she took the caution ill,
And boldly rose against his sovereign will;
With idiot-cunning she would watch the hour,
When friends were present, to dispute his power:
With tyrant-craft, he then was still and calm,
But raised in private terror and alarm:
By many trials, she perceived how far
To vex and tease, without an open war;
And he discover'd that so weak a mind
No art could lead, and no compulsion bind;
The rudest force would fail such mind to tame,
And she was callous to rebuke and shame;
Proud of her wealth, the power of law she knew,
And would assist him in the spending too:
His threat'ning words with insult she defied,
To all his reasoning with a stare replied;
And when he begg'd her to attend, would say,
" Attend I will—but let me have my way."

Nor rest had Conscience: " While you merit pain
" From me," she cried, " you seek redress in vain."
His thoughts were grievous: " All that I possess
" From this vile bargain adds to my distress;
" To pass a life with one who will not mend,
" Who cannot love, nor save, nor wisely spend,
" Is a vile prospect, and I see no end:
" For if we part, I must of course restore
" Much of her money, and must wed no more."

" Is there no way?"—Here Conscience rose in power,—
" Oh! fly the danger of this fatal hour;
" I am thy Conscience, faithful, fond, and true:
" Ah, fly this thought, or evil must ensue;
" Fall on thy knees, and pray with all thy soul,
" Thy purpose banish, thy design control:
" Let every hope of such advantage cease,
" Or never more expect a moment's peace."

Th' affrighten'd man a due attention paid,
Felt the rebuke, and the command obey'd.

Again the wife rebell'd, again express'd
A love for pleasure—a contempt of rest;
" She whom she pleased would visit, would receive
" Those who pleased her, nor deign to ask for leave."

" One way there is," said he; " I might contrive
" Into a trap this foolish thing to drive:
" Who pleased her, said she?—I'll be certain who."
" Take heed," said Conscience, " what thou mean'st to do:
" Ensnare thy wife?"—" Why, yes," he must confess,
" It might be wrong, but there was no redress;
" Beside, to think," said he, " is not to sin."
" Mistaken man!" replied the power within.

No guest unnoticed to the lady came,
He judged th' event with mingled joy and shame;
Oft he withdrew, and seem'd to leave her free,
But still as watchful as a lynx was he;
Meanwhile the wife was thoughtless, cool, and gay,
And, without virtue, had no wish to stray.

Though thus opposed, his plans were not resign'd;
" Revenge," said he, " will prompt that daring mind;
" Refused supplies, insulted and distress'd,
" Enraged with me, and near a favourite guest—
" Then will her vengeance prompt the daring deed,
" And I shall watch, detect her, and be freed."

There was a youth—but let me hide the name,
With all the progress of this deed of shame;
He had his views—on him the husband cast
His net, and saw him in his trammels fast.

" Pause but a moment—think what you intend,"
Said the roused Sleeper: " I am yet a friend.
" Must all our days in enmity be spent?"
" No!" and he paused—" I surely shall repent:"
Then hurried on—the evil plan was laid,
The wife was guilty, and her friend betray'd,
And Fulham gain'd his wish, and for his will was paid.

Had crimes less weighty on the spirit press'd,
This troubled Conscience might have sunk to rest;
And, like a foolish guard, been bribed to peace,
By a false promise, that offence should cease;
Past faults had seem'd familiar to the view,
Confused if many, and obscure though true;
And Conscience, troubled with the dull account,
Had dropp'd her tale, and slumber'd o'er th' amount:
But, struck by daring guilt, alert she rose,
Disturb'd, alarm'd, and could no more repose;
All hopes of friendship and of peace were past,
And every view with gloom was overcast.
Hence from that day, that day of shame and sin,
Arose the restless enmity within:
On no resource could Fulham now rely,
Doom'd all expedients, and in vain, to try;
For Conscience, roused, sat boldly on her throne,
Watch'd every thought, attack'd the foe alone,
And with envenom'd sting drew forth the inward groan:
Expedients fail'd that brought relief before,
In vain his alms gave comfort to the poor,
Give what he would, to him the comfort came no more:
Not prayer avail'd, and when (his crimes confess'd)
He felt some ease, she said, " Are they redress'd?
" You still retain the profit, and be sure,
" Long as it lasts, this anguish shall endure."

Fulham still tried to soothe her, cheat, mislead,
But Conscience laid her finger on the deed,
And read the crime with power, and all that must succeed:

He tried t' expel her, but was sure to find
Her strength increased by all that he design'd;
Nor ever was his groan more loud and deep
Than when refresh'd she rose from momentary sleep.

Now desperate grown, weak, harass'd, and afraid,
From new allies he sought for doubtful aid;
To thought itself he strove to bid adieu,
And from devotions to diversions flew;
He took a poor domestic for a slave
(Though avarice grieved to see the price he gave);
Upon his board, once frugal, press'd a load
Of viands rich, the appetite to goad;
The long-protracted meal, the sparkling cup,
Fought with his gloom, and kept his courage up:
Soon as the morning came, there met his eyes
Accounts of wealth, that he might reading rise;
To profit then he gave some active hours,
Till food and wine again should renovate his powers:
Yet, spite of all defence, of every aid,
The watchful Foe her close attention paid;
In every thoughtful moment on she press'd,
And gave at once her dagger to his breast;
He waked at midnight, and the fears of sin,
As waters through a bursten dam, broke in;
Nay, in the banquet, with his friends around,
When all their cares and half their crimes were drown'd,
Would some chance act awake the slumbering fear;
And care and crime in all their strength appear:
The news is read, a guilty victim swings,
And troubled looks proclaim the bosom-stings:
Some pair are wed; this brings the wife in view;
And some divorced; this shows the parting too:
Nor can he hear of evil word or deed,
But they to thought, and thought to sufferings lead.

Such was his life—no other changes came,
The hurrying day, the conscious night the same;
The night of horror—when he starting cried
To the poor startled sinner at his side,
"Is it in law? am I condemn'd to die?
"Let me escape!——I 'll give—oh! let me fly—
"How! but a dream!—no judges! dungeon! chain!
"Or these grim men!—I will not sleep again.—
"Wilt thou, dread being! thus thy promise keep?
"Day is thy time—and wilt thou murder sleep?
"Sorrow and want repose, and wilt thou come,
"Nor give one hour of pure untroubled gloom?

"Oh! Conscience! Conscience! man's most faithful friend,
"Him canst thou comfort, ease, relieve, defend;
"But if he will thy friendly checks forego,
"Thou art, oh! woe for me, his deadliest foe!" [6]

[6] ["Conscienza l'assicura,
La buona compagna che l'uom francheggia
Sotto l'usbergo del esser puro."—DANTE.

"He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' th' centre and enjoy bright day.
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon."—MILTON.]

TALE XV.

ADVICE; OR, THE 'SQUIRE AND THE PRIEST.

His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports—
And never noted in him any study,
Any retirement, any sequestration. *Henry V.*

I will converse with iron-witted fools,
With unrespective boys; none are for me,
Who look into me with considerate eyes.—*Richard III.*

You cram these words into mine ears, against
The stomach of my sense. *Tempest.*

A WEALTHY Lord of far-extended land
Had all that pleased him placed at his command;
Widow'd of late, but, finding much relief
In the world's comforts, he dismiss'd his grief;
He was by marriage of his daughters eased,
And knew his sons could marry if they pleased;
Meantime in travel he indulged the boys,
And kept no spy nor partner of his joys.

These joys, indeed, were of the grosser kind,
That fed the cravings of an earthly mind;
A mind that, conscious of its own excess,
Felt the reproach his neighbours would express.
Long at th' indulgent board he loved to sit,
Where joy was laughter, and profaneness wit;
And such the guest and manners of the Hall,
No wedded lady on the 'Squire would call:
Here reign'd a Favourite, and her triumph gain'd
O'er other favourites who before had reign'd;
Reserved and modest seem'd the nymph to be,
Knowing her lord was charm'd with modesty;
For he, a sportsman keen, the more enjoy'd,
The greater value had the thing destroy'd.

Our 'Squire declared, that, from a wife released,
He would no more give trouble to a Priest;
Seem'd it not, then, ungrateful and unkind
That he should trouble from the priesthood find?
The Church he honour'd, and he gave the due
And full respect to every son he knew;
But envied those who had the luck to meet
A gentle pastor, civil, and discreet;
Who never bold and hostile sermon penn'd,
To wound a sinner, or to shame a friend;
One whom no being either shunn'd or fear'd:
Such must be loved wherever they appear'd.

Not such the stern old Rector of the time,
Who soothed no culprit, and who spared no crime;
Who would his fears and his contempt express
For irreligion and licentiousness;

Of him our Village Lord, his guests among,
By speech vindictive proved his feelings stung.

"Were he a bigot," said the 'Squire, "whose zeal
"Condemn'd us all, I should disdain to feel:
"But when a man of parts, in college train'd,
"Prates of our conduct, who would not be pain'd?
"While he declaims (where no one dares reply)
"On men abandon'd, grov'ling in the sty
"(Like beasts in human shape) of shameless luxury.
"Yet with a patriot's zeal I stand the shock
"Of vile rebuke, example to his flock:
"But let this Rector, thus severe and proud,
"Change his wide surplice for a narrow shroud,
"And I will place within his seat a youth,
"Train'd by the Graces to explain the Truth;
"Then shall the flock with gentle hand be led,
"By wisdom won, and by compassion fed."

This purposed Teacher was a sister's son,
Who of her children gave the priesthood one;
And she had early train'd for this employ
The pliant talents of her college-boy:
At various times her letters painted all
Her brother's views—the manners of the Hall;
The rector's harshness, and the mischief made
By chiding those whom preachers should persuade:
This led the youth to views of easy life,
A friendly patron, an obliging wife;
His tithe, his glebe, the garden, and the steed,
With books as many as he wish'd to read.

All this accorded with the Uncle's will:
He loved a priest compliant, easy, still;
Sums he had often to his favourite sent,
"To be," he wrote, "in manly freedom spent;
"For well it pleased his spirit to assist
"An honest lad, who scorn'd a Methodist."
His mother, too, in her maternal care,
Bade him of canting hypocrites beware;
Who from his duties would his heart seduce,
And make his talents of no earthly use.

Soon must a trial of his worth be made—
The ancient priest is to the tomb convey'd;
And the Youth summon'd from a serious friend,
His guide and host, new duties to attend.

Three months before, the nephew and the 'Squire
Saw mutual worth to praise and to admire;
And though the one too early left his wine,
The other still exclaim'd—"My boy will shine:
"Yes, I perceive that he will soon improve,
"And I shall form the very guide I love;
"Decent abroad, he will my name defend,
"And when at home, be social and unbend."

The plan was specious, for the mind of *James*
Accorded duly with his uncle's schemes:
He then aspired not to a higher name
Than sober clerks of moderate talents claim;
Gravely to pray, and rev'rendly to preach,
Was all he saw, good youth! within his reach:
Thus may a mass of sulphur long abide,
Cold and inert, but, to the flame applied,
Kindling it blazes, and consuming turns
To smoke and poison, as it boils and burns.

James, leaving college, to a Preacher stray'd;
What call'd he knew not—but the call obey'd:
Mild, idle, pensive, ever led by those
Who could some specious novelty propose;
Humbly he listen'd, while the preacher dwelt
On touching themes, and strong emotions felt;
And in this night was fix'd that pliant will
To one sole point, and he retains it still.

At first his care was to himself confined;
Himself assured, he gave it to mankind:
His zeal grew active—honest, earnest zeal,
And comfort dealt to him, he long'd to deal;
He to his favourite preacher now withdrew,
Was taught to teach, instructed to subdue,
And train'd for ghostly warfare, when the call
Of his new duties reach'd him from the Hall.

Now to the 'Squire, although alert and stout,
Came unexpected an attack of gout;
And the grieved patron felt such serious pain,
He never thought to see a church again:
Thrice had the youthful rector taught the crowd,
Whose growing numbers spoke his powers aloud,
Before the patron could himself rejoice
(His pain still lingering) in the general voice;
For he imputed all this early fame
To graceful manner and the well-known name;
And to himself assumed a share of praise,
For worth and talents he was pleased to raise.

A month had flown, and with it fled disease;
What pleased before, began again to please;
Emerging daily from his chamber's gloom,
He found his old sensations hurrying home;
Then call'd his nephew, and exclaim'd, "My boy,
"Let us again the balm of life enjoy;
"The foe has left me, and I deem it right,
"Should he return, to arm me for the fight."

Thus spoke the 'Squire, the favourite nymph stood by,
And view'd the priest with insult in her eye;
She thrice had heard him when he boldly spoke
On dangerous points, and fear'd he would revoke:
For James she loved not—and her manner told,
"This warm affection will be quickly cold;"
And still she fear'd impression might be made
Upon a subject nervous and decay'd;
She knew her danger, and had no desire
Of reformation in the gallant 'Squire;
And felt an envious pleasure in her breast
To see the rector daunted and distress'd.

Again the Uncle to the youth applied—
"Cast, my dear lad, that cursed gloom aside:
"There are for all things time and place; appear
"Grave in your pulpit, and be merry here:
"Now take your wine—for woes a sure resource,
"And the best prelude to a long discourse."

James half obey'd, but cast an angry eye
On the fair lass, who still stood watchful by;
Resolving thus, "I have my fears—but still
"I must perform my duties, and I will:

" No love, no interest, shall my mind control;
" Better to lose my comforts than my soul;
" Better my uncle's favour to abjure,
" Than the upbraidings of my heart endure.".

He took his glass, and then address'd the 'Squire:
" I feel not well, permit me to retire."
The 'Squire conceived that the ensuing day
Gave him these terrors for the grand essay,
When he himself should this young preacher try,
And stand before him with observant eye;
This raised compassion in his manly breast,
And he would send the rector to his rest:
Yet first, in soothing voice—" A moment stay,
" And these suggestions of a friend obey;
" Treasure these hints, if fame or peace you prize,—
" The bottle emptied, I shall close my eyes.

" On every priest a twofold care attends,
" To prove his talents, and insure his friends:
" First, of the first—your stores at once produce;
" And bring your reading to its proper use:
" On doctrines dwell, and every point enforce
" By quoting much, the scholar's sure resource;
" For he alone can show us on each head
" What ancient schoolmen and sage fathers said:
" No worth has knowledge, if you fail to show
" How well you studied and how much you know:
" Is faith your subject, and you judge it right
" On theme so dark to cast a ray of light,
" Be it that faith the orthodox maintain,
" Found in the rubric, what the creeds explain;
" Fail not to show us on this ancient faith
" (And quote the passage) what some martyr saith:
" Dwell not one moment on a faith that shocks
" The minds of men sincere and orthodox;
" That gloomy faith, that robs the wounded mind
" Of all the comfort it was wont to find
" From virtuous acts, and to the soul denies
" Its proper due for alms and charities;
" That partial faith, that, weighing sins alone,
" Lets not a virtue for a fault atone;
" That starving faith, that would our tables clear,
" And make one dreadful Lent of all the year;
" And cruel too, for this is faith that rends
" Confiding beauties from protecting friends;
" A faith that all embracing, what a gloom
" Deep and terrific o'er the land would come!
" What scenes of horror would that time disclose!
" No sight but misery, and no sound but woes;
" Your nobler faith, in loftier style convey'd,
" Shall be with praise and admiration paid:
" On points like these your hearers all admire
" A preacher's depth, and nothing more require.
" Shall we a studious youth to college send,
" That every clown his words may comprehend?
" 'Tis for your glory, when your hearers own
" Your learning matchless, but the sense unknown.

" Thus honour gain'd, learn now to gain a friend,
" And the sure way is—never to offend;
" For, James, consider—what your neighbours do
" Is their own business, and concerns not you:
" Shun all resemblance to that forward race
" Who preach of sins before a sinner's face;
" And seem as if they overlook'd a pew,
" Only to drag a failing man in view:
" Much should I feel, when groaning in disease,
" If a rough hand upon my limb should seize;
" But great my anger, if this hand were found
" The very doctor's who should make it sound:
" So feel our minds, young Priest, so doubly feel,
" When hurt by those whose office is to heal.

" Yet of our duties you must something tell,
" And must at times on sin and frailty dwell;
" Here you may preach in easy, flowing style,
" How errors cloud us, and how sins defile:
" Here bring persuasive tropes and figures forth,
" To show the poor that wealth is nothing worth;
" That they, in fact, possess an ample share
" Of the world's good, and feel not half its care;
" Give them this comfort, and, indeed, my gout
" In its full vigour causes me some doubt;
" And let it always, for your zeal, suffice
" That vice you combat, in the abstract—vice:
" The very captious will be quiet then;
" We all confess we are offending men:
" In lashing sin, of every stroke beware,
" For sinners feel, and sinners you must spare;
" In general satire, every man perceives
" A slight attack, yet neither fears nor grieves;
" But name th' offence, and you absolve the rest,
" And point the dagger at a single breast.

" Yet are there sinners of a class so low,
" That you with safety may the lash bestow;
" Poachers, and drunkards, idle rogues, who feed
" At others' cost, a mark'd correction need:
" And all the better sort, who see your zeal,
" Will love and reverence for their pastor feel;
" Reverence for one who can inflict the smart,
" And love, because he deals them not a part.

" Remember well what love and age advise;
" A quiet rector is a parish prize,
" Who in his learning has a decent pride;
" Who to his people is a gentle guide;
" Who only hints at failings that he sees;
" Who loves his glebe, his patron, and his ease,
" And finds the way to fame and profit is to please.".

The Nephew answer'd not, except a sigh
And look of sorrow might be term'd reply;
He saw the fearful hazard of his state,
And held with truth and safety strong debate;
Nor long he reason'd, for the zealous youth
Resolved, though timid, to profess the truth;
And though his friend should like a lion roar,
Truth would he preach, and neither less nor more.

The bells had toll'd—arrived the time of prayer,
The flock assembled, and the 'Squire was there:
And now can poet sing, or proseman say,
The disappointment of that trying day?

As he who long had train'd a favourite steed,
(Whose blood and bone gave promise of his speed,)
Sanguine with hope, he runs with partial eye
O'er every feature, and his bets are high;
Of triumph sure, he sees the rivals start,
And waits their coming with exulting heart;

Forestalling glory, with impatient glance,
And sure to see his conquering steed advance;
The conquering steed advances—luckless day!
A rival's *Herod* bears the prize away,
Nor second his, nor third, but lagging last,
With hanging head he comes; by all surpass'd:
Surprise and wrath the owner's mind inflame,
Love turns to scorn, and glory ends in shame;—
Thus waited, high in hope, the partial 'Squire,
Eager to hear, impatient to admire;
When the young Preacher, in the tones that find
A certain passage to the kindling mind,
With air and accent strange, impressive, sad,
Alarm'd the judge—he trembled for the lad;
But when the text announced the power of grace,
Amazement scowl'd upon his clouded face
At this degenerate son of his illustrious race;
Staring he stood, till hope again arose
That James might well define the words he chose:
For this he listen'd—but, alas! he found
The preacher always on forbidden ground.

And now the Uncle left the hated pew,
With James, and James's conduct, in his view;
A long farewell to all his favourite schemes!
For now no crazed fanatic's frantic dreams
Seem'd vile as James's conduct, or as James:
All he had long derided, hated, fear'd,
This, from *the chosen* youth, the uncle heard;—
The needless pause, the fierce disorder'd air,
The groan for sin, the vehemence of prayer,
Gave birth to wrath, that, in a long discourse
Of grace triumphant, rose to fourfold force:
He found his thoughts despised, his rules transgress'd,
And while the anger kindled in his breast,
The pain must be endured that could not be express'd:
Each new idea more inflamed his ire,
As fuel thrown upon a rising fire:
A hearer yet, he sought by threatening sign
To ease his heart, and awe the young divine;
But James refused those angry looks to meet,
Till he dismiss'd his flock, and left his seat:
Exhausted then he felt his trembling frame,
But fix'd his soul,—his sentiments the same;
And therefore wise it seem'd to fly from rage,
And seek for shelter in his parsonage:
There, if forsaken, yet consoled to find
Some comforts left, though not a few resign'd;
There, if he lost an erring parent's love,
An honest conscience must the cause approve;
If the nice palate were no longer fed,
The mind enjoy'd delicious thoughts instead;
And if some part of earthly good was flown,
Still was the tithe of ten good farms his own.

Fear now, and discord, in the village reign.
The cool remonstrate, and the meek complain;
But there is war within, and wisdom pleads in vain.
Now dreads the Uncle, and proclaims his dread,
Lest the Boy-priest should turn each rustic head;
The certain converts cost him certain woe,
The doubtful fear lest they should join the foe:
Matrons of old, with whom he used to joke,
Now pass his Honour with a pious look;
Lasses, who met him once with lively airs,
Now cross his way, and gravely walk to prayers:
An old companion, whom he long has loved,
By coward fears confess'd his conscience moved;
As the third bottle gave its spirit forth,
And they bore witness to departing worth,
The friend arose, and he too would depart:—
"Man," said the 'Squire, "thou wert not wont to start;
"Hast thou attended to that foolish boy,
"Who would abridge all comforts, or destroy?"

Yes, he had listen'd, who had slumber'd long,
And was convinced that something must be wrong:
But, though affected, still his yielding heart,
And craving palate, took the Uncle's part;
Wine now oppress'd him, who, when free from wine,
Could seldom clearly utter his design;
But though by nature and indulgence weak,
Yet, half converted, he resolved to speak;
And, speaking, own'd, "that in his mind the Youth
"Had gifts and learning, and that truth was truth:
"The 'Squire he honour'd, and, for his poor part,
"He hated nothing like a hollow heart:
"But 't was a maxim he had often tried,
"That right was right, and there he would abide;
"He honour'd learning, and he would confess
"The preacher had his talents—more or less:
"Why not agree? he thought the young divine
"Had no such strictness—they might drink and dine;
"For them sufficient—but he said before,
"That truth was truth, and he would drink no more."

This heard the 'Squire with mix'd contempt and pain;
He fear'd the Priest this recreant sot would gain.
The favourite Nymph, though not a convert made,
Conceived the man she scorn'd her cause would aid,
And when the spirits of her lord were low,
The lass presumed the wicked cause to show;
"It was the wretched life his Honour led,
"And would draw vengeance on his guilty head;
"Their loves (Heav'n knew how dreadfully distress'd
"The thought had made her!) were as yet unbless'd:
"And till the church had sanction'd"—Here she saw
The wrath that forced her trembling to withdraw.

Add to these outward ills some inward light,
That show'd him all was not correct and right:
Though now he less indulged—and to the poor,
From day to day, sent alms from door to door;
Though he some ease from easy virtues found,
Yet conscience told him he could not compound,
But must himself the darling sin deny,
Change the whole heart,—but here a heavy sigh
Proclaim'd, "How vast the toil! and, ah! how weak am I!"

James too has trouble—he divided sees
A parish, once harmonious and at ease;

With him united are the simply meek,
The warm, the sad, the nervous, and the weak;
The rest his Uncle's, save the few beside,
Who own no doctrine, and obey no guide;
With stragglers of each adverse camp, who lend
Their aid to both, but each in turn offend.

Though zealous still, yet he begins to feel
The heat too fierce that glows in vulgar zeal;
With pain he hears his simple friends relate
Their week's experience, and their woful state;
With small temptation struggling every hour,
And bravely battling with the tempting power;
His native sense is hurt by strange complaints
Of inward motions in these warring saints;
Who never cast on sinful bait a look,
But they perceive the devil at the hook:
Grieved, yet compell'd to smile, he finds it hard
Against the blunders of conceit to guard;
He sighs to hear the jests his converts cause,
He cannot give their erring zeal applause;
But finds it inconsistent to condemn
The flights and follies he has nursed in them:
These, in opposing minds, contempt produce,
Or mirth occasion, or provoke abuse;
On each momentous theme disgrace they bring,
And give to Scorn her poison and her sting.

TALE XVI.

THE CONFIDANT.[1]

Think'st thou I 'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicion? *Othello.*

Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks,
And given my treasure and my rights in thee
To thick-eyed musing and cursed melancholy?
1 Henry IV.

It is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but tyrannous
To use it as a giant. *Measure for Measure.*

Anna was young and lovely—in her eye
The glance of beauty, in her cheek the dye:
Her shape was slender, and her features small,
But graceful, easy, unaffected all:
The liveliest tints her youthful face disclosed;
There beauty sparkled, and there health reposed;
For the pure blood that flush'd that rosy cheek
Spoke what the heart forbade the tongue to speak,
And told the feelings of that heart as well,
Nay, with more candour than the tongue could tell.
Though this fair lass had with the wealthy dwelt,
Yet like the damsel of the cot she felt;
And, at the distant hint or dark surmise,
The blood into the mantling cheek would rise.

Now Anna's station frequent terrors wrought
In one whose looks were with such meaning fraught,
For on a Lady, as an humble friend,
It was her painful office to attend.

Her duties here were of the usual kind—
And some the body harass'd, some the mind:
Billets she wrote, and tender stories read,
To make the Lady sleepy in her bed;
She play'd at whist, but with inferior skill,
And heard the summons as a call to drill:
Music was ever pleasant till she play'd
At a request that no request convey'd;
The Lady's tales with anxious looks she heard,
For she must witness what her Friend averr'd;
The Lady's taste she must in all approve,
Hate whom she hated, whom she lov'd must love;
These, with the various duties of her place,
With care she studied, and perform'd with grace:
She veil'd her troubles in a mask of ease,
And show'd her pleasure was a power to please.

Such were the damsel's duties: she was poor—
Above a servant, but with service more:
Men on her face with careless freedom gaz'd,
Nor thought how painful was the glow they raised.
A wealthy few to gain her favour tried,
But not the favour of a grateful bride;
They spoke their purpose with an easy air,
That shamed and frighten'd the dependent fair;
Past time she view'd, the passing time to cheat,
But nothing found to make the present sweet:
With pensive soul she read life's future page,
And saw dependent, poor, repining age.

But who shall dare t' assert what *years* may bring,
When wonders from the passing *hour* may spring?
There dwelt a Yeoman in the place, whose mind
Was gentle, generous, cultivated, kind;
For thirty years he labour'd; fortune then
Placed the mild rustic with superior men:
A richer Stafford who had liv'd to save,
What he had treasured to the poorer gave;
Who with a sober mind that treasure view'd,
And the slight studies of his youth renew'd:
He not profoundly, but discreetly read,
And a fair mind with useful culture fed;
Then thought of marriage—"But the great," said he,
"I shall not suit, nor will the meaner me."
Anna, he saw, admired her modest air;
He thought her virtuous, and he knew her fair;
Love raised his pity for her humble state,
And prompted wishes for her happier fate;
No pride in money would his feelings wound,
Nor vulgar manners hurt him and confound:
He then the Lady at the Hall address'd,
Sought her consent, and his regard express'd:
Yet if some cause his earnest wish denied,
He begg'd to know it, and he bow'd and sigh'd.

[1] [The reader will find the tale of 'The Confidant' thrown into a little drama of seven scenes, by Mr. Charles Lamb, author of 'Elia's Essays,' &c. &c., in vol. xxiv. of Blackwood's Magazine, p. 764. The version is so close that we need not quote specimens of it here; but the whole will certainly reward an attentive perusal. Our wonder is, that so little use has hitherto been made of our poet's tales as materials for dramatic composition.]

The Lady own'd that she was loth to part,
But praised the damsel for her gentle heart,
Her pleasing person, and her blooming health,
But ended thus, "Her virtue is her wealth."

"Then is she rich!" he cried with lively air;
"But whence, so please you, came a lass so fair?"

"A placeman's child was Anna, one who died
"And left a widow by afflictions tried;
"She to support her infant daughter strove,
"But early left the object of her love:
"Her youth, her beauty, and her orphan state
"Gave a kind countess interest in her fate:
"With her she dwelt and still might dwelling be,
"When the earl's folly caused the lass to flee;
"A second friend was she compell'd to shun,
"By the rude offers of an uncheck'd son;
"I found her then, and with a mother's love
"Regard the gentle girl whom you approve:
"Yet e'en with me protection is not peace,
"Nor man's designs nor beauty's trials cease:
"Like sordid boys by costly fruit they feel—
"They will not purchase, but they try to steal."

Now this good Lady, like a witness true,
Told but the truth, and all the truth she knew;
And 't is our duty and our pain to show
Truth this good lady had not means to know.
Yes, there was lock'd within the damsel's breast
A fact important to be now confess'd;
Gently, my muse, th' afflicting tale relate,
And have some feeling for a sister's fate.

Where Anna dwelt, a conquering hero came,—
An Irish captain, *Sedley* was his name;
And he too had that same prevailing art,
That gave soft wishes to the virgin's heart:
In years they differ'd; he had thirty seen
When this young beauty counted just fifteen;
But still they were a lovely lively pair,
And trod on earth as if they trod on air.

On love, delightful theme! the captain dwelt
With force still growing with the hopes he felt;
But with some caution and reluctance told,
He had a father crafty, harsh, and old;
Who, as possessing much, would much expect,
Or both, for ever, from his love reject;
Why then offence to one so powerful give,
Who (for their comfort) had not long to live?

With this poor prospect the deluded maid,
In words confiding, was indeed betray'd;
And, soon as terrors in her bosom rose,
The hero fled; they hinder'd his repose.
Deprived of him, she to a parent's breast
Her secret trusted, and her pains impress'd;
Let her to town (so prudence urged) repair,
To shun disgrace, at least to hide it there;
But ere she went, the luckless damsel pray'd
A chosen friend might lend her timely aid:
"Yes! my soul's sister, my Eliza, come,
"Hear her last sigh, and ease thy Anna's doom."
"'T is a fool's wish," the angry father cried,
But, lost in troubles of his own, complied;
And dear Eliza to her friend was sent,
T' indulge that wish, and be her punishment.

The time arrived, and brought a tenfold dread;
The time was past, and all the terror fled;
The infant died; the face resumed each charm,
And reason now brought trouble and alarm.

Should her Eliza—no! she was too just,
"Too good and kind—but ah! too young to trust."
Anna return'd, her former place resumed,
And faded beauty with new grace re-bloom'd;
And if some whispers of the past were heard,
They died innoxious, as no cause appear'd;
But other cares on Anna's bosom press'd,
She saw her father gloomy and distress'd;
He died o'erwhelm'd with debt, and soon was shed
The filial sorrow o'er a mother dead:
She sought Eliza's arms—that faithful friend was wed;
Then was compassion by the countess shown,
And all th' adventures of her life are known.

And now, beyond her hopes—no longer tried
By slavish awe—she lived a Yeoman's bride;
Then bless'd her lot, and with a grateful mind
Was careful, cheerful, vigilant, and kind:
The gentle husband felt supreme delight,
Bless'd by her joy, and happy in her sight;
He saw with pride in every friend and guest
High admiration and regard express'd:
With greater pride, and with superior joy,
He look'd exulting on his first-born boy;
To her fond breast the wife her infant strain'd,
Some feelings utter'd, some were not explain'd;
And she enraptured with her treasure grew,
The sight familiar, but the pleasure new.

Yet there appear'd within that tranquil state
Some threat'ning prospect of uncertain fate;
Between the married when a secret lies,
It wakes suspicion from enforced disguise:
Still thought the Wife upon her absent friend,
With all that must upon her truth depend.
"There is no being in the world beside
"Who can discover what that friend will hide;
"Who knew the fact, knew *not* my name or state,
"Who these can tell cannot the fact relate;
"But thou, Eliza, canst the whole impart,
"And all my safety is thy generous heart."

Mix'd with these fears—but light and transient *these*—
Fled years of peace, prosperity, and ease;
So tranquil all, that scarce a gloomy day
For days of gloom unmix'd prepared the way:
One eve, the Wife, still happy in her state,
Sang gaily, thoughtless of approaching fate;
Then came a letter, that (received in dread
Not unobserved) she in confusion read;
The substance this—"Her friend rejoiced to find
"That she had riches with a grateful mind;
"While poor Eliza had, from place to place,
"Been lured by hope to labour for disgrace;
"That every scheme her wandering husband tried,
"Pain'd while he lived, and perish'd when he died."
She then of want in angry style complain'd,
Her child a burthen to her life remain'd,
Her kindred shunn'd her prayers, no friend her soul sustain'd.

"Yet why neglected? Dearest Anna knew
"Her worth once tried, her friendship ever true;
"She hoped, she trusted, though by wants oppress'd,
"To lock the treasured secret in her breast;
"Yet, vex'd by trouble, must apply to one,
"For kindness due to her for kindness done."

In Anna's mind was tumult, in her face
Flushings of dread had momentary place:
"I must," she judged, "these cruel lines expose,
"Or fears, or worse than fears, my crime disclose."

The letter shown, he said, with sober smile,—
"Anna, your Friend has not a friendly style:
"Say, where could you with this fair lady dwell,
"Who boasts of secrets that she scorns to tell?"
"At school," she answer'd: he "At school!" replied;
"Nay, then I know the secrets you would hide;
"Some early longings these, without dispute,
"Some youthful gaspings for forbidden fruit:
"Why so disorder'd, love? are such the crimes
"That give us sorrow in our graver times?
"Come, take a present for your friend, and rest
"In perfect peace—you find you are confess'd."

This cloud, though past, alarm'd the conscious wife,
Presaging gloom and sorrow for her life;
Who to her answer join'd a fervent prayer
That her Eliza would a sister spare:
If she again—but was there cause?—should send,
Let her direct—and then she named a friend:
A sad expedient untried friends to trust,
And still to fear the tried may be unjust:
Such is his pain, who, by his debt oppress'd,
Seeks by new bonds a temporary rest.

Few were her peaceful days till Anna read
The words she dreaded, and had cause to dread:—

"Did she believe, did she, unkind, suppose
"That thus Eliza's friendship was to close?
"No, though she tried, and her desire was plain,
"To break the friendly bond, she strove in vain:
"Ask'd she for silence? why so loud the call,
"And yet the token of her love so small?
"By means like these will you attempt to bind
"And check the movements of an injured mind?
"Poor as I am, I shall be proud to show
"What dangerous secrets I may safely know:
"Secrets to men of jealous minds convey'd
"Have many a noble house in ruins laid;
"Anna, I trust, although with wrongs beset,
"And urged by want, I shall be faithful yet;
"But what temptation may from these arise,
"To take a slighted woman by surprise,
"Becomes a subject for your serious care—
"For who offends, must for offence prepare."

Perplex'd, dismay'd, the Wife foresaw her doom;
A day deferr'd was yet a day to come;
But still, though painful her suspended state,
She dreaded more the crisis of her fate:
Better to die than Stafford's scorn to meet,
And her strange friend perhaps would be discreet:
Presents she sent, and made a strong appeal
To woman's feelings, begging her to feel;
With too much force she wrote of jealous men,
And her tears falling spoke beyond the pen;
Eliza's silence she again implored,
And promised all that prudence could afford.

For looks composed and careless Anna tried;
She seem'd in trouble, and unconscious sigh'd:
The faithful Husband, who devoutly loved
His silent partner, with concern reproved:
"What secret sorrows on my Anna press,
"That love may not partake, nor care redress?"
"None, none," she answer'd, with a look so kind,
That the fond man determined to be blind.

A few succeeding weeks of brief repose
In Anna's cheek revived the faded rose;
A hue like this the western sky displays,
That glows awhile, and withers as we gaze.

Again the Friend's tormenting letter came—
"The wants she suffer'd were affection's shame;
"She with her child a life of terrors led,
"Unhappy fruit, but of a lawful bed:
"Her friend was tasting every bliss in life,
"The joyful mother, and the wealthy wife;
"While she was placed in doubt, in fear, in want,
"To starve on trifles that the happy grant;
"Poorly for all her faithful silence paid,
"And tantalized by ineffectual aid:
"She could not thus a beggar's lot endure;
"She wanted something permanent and sure:
"If they were friends, then equal be their lot,
"And she was free to speak if they were not."

Despair and terror seized the Wife, to find
The artful workings of a vulgar mind:
Money she had not, but the hint of dress
Taught her new bribes, new terrors to redress:
She with such feeling then described her woes,
That envy's self might on the view repose;
Then to a mother's pains she made appeal,
And painted grief like one compell'd to feel.

Yes! so she felt, that in her air, her face,
In every purpose, and in every place,
In her slow motion, in her languid mien,
The grief, the sickness of her soul, were seen.

Of some mysterious ill, the Husband sure,
Desired to trace it, for he hoped to cure;
Something he knew obscurely, and had seen
His wife attend a cottage on the green;
Love, loth to wound, endured conjecture long,
Till fear would speak, and spoke in language strong.

"All I must know, my Anna—truly know
"Whence these emotions, terrors, troubles flow:
"Give me thy grief, and I will fairly prove
"Mine is no selfish, no ungenerous love."

Now Anna's soul the seat of strife became,
Fear with respect contended, love with shame:
But fear prevailing was the ruling guide,
Prescribing what to show and what to hide.

"It is my friend," she said—"but why disclose
"A woman's weakness struggling with her woes?
"Yes, she has grieved me by her fond complaints,
"The wrongs she suffers, the distress she paints:
"Something we do—but she afflicts me still,
"And says, with power to help, I want the will;
"This plaintive style I pity and excuse,
"Help when I can, and grieve when I refuse;
"But here my useless sorrows I resign,
"And will be happy in a love like thine."

The Husband doubted: he was kind but cool:—
"'T is a strong friendship to arise at school;
"Once more then, love, once more the sufferer aid,—
"I too can pity, but I must upbraid:
"Of these vain feelings then thy bosom free,
"Nor be o'erwhelm'd by useless sympathy."

The Wife again despatch'd the useless bribe,
Again essay'd her terrors to describe;
Again with kindest words entreated peace,
And begg'd her offerings for a time might cease.

A calm succeeded, but too like the one
That causes terror ere the storm comes on:
A secret sorrow lived in Anna's heart,
In Stafford's mind a secret fear of art;
Not long they lasted—this determined foe
Knew all her claims, and nothing would forego;
Again her letter came, where Anna read,
"My child, one cause of my distress, is dead:
"Heav'n has my infant."—"Heartless wretch!" she cried,
"Is this thy joy?"—"I am no longer tied:
"Now will I, hast'ning to my friend, partake
"Her cares and comforts, and no more forsake;
"Now shall we both in equal station move,
"Save that my friend enjoys a husband's love."

Complaint and threats so strong the Wife amazed,
Who wildly on her cottage-neighbour gazed;
Her tones, her trembling, first betray'd her grief,
When floods of tears gave anguish its relief.

She fear'd that Stafford would refuse assent,
And knew her selfish Friend would not relent;
She must petition, yet delay'd the task,
Ashamed, afraid, and yet compell'd to ask;
Unknown to him some object fill'd her mind,
And, once suspicious, he became unkind:
They sat one evening, each absorb'd in gloom,
When, hark! a noise; and, rushing to the room,
The Friend tripp'd lightly in, and laughing said,
"I come."

Anna received her with an anxious mind,
And meeting whisper'd, "Is Eliza kind?"
Reserved and cool the Husband sought to prove
The depth and force of this mysterious love.
To nought that pass'd between the Stranger-friend
And his meek partner seem'd he to attend;
But, anxious, listen'd to the lightest word
That might some knowledge of his guest afford;
And learn the reason one to him so dear
Should feel such fondness, yet betray such fear.

Soon he perceived this uninvited guest,
Unwelcome too, a sovereign power possess'd;
Lofty she was and careless, while the meek
And humbled Anna was afraid to speak:
As mute she listen'd with a painful smile,
Her friend sat laughing, and at ease the while,
Telling her idle tales with all the glee
Of careless and unfeeling levity.
With calm good sense he knew his Wife endued,
And now with wounded pride her conduct view'd;
Her speech was low, her every look convey'd—
"I am a slave, subservient and afraid."
All trace of comfort vanish'd; if she spoke,
The noisy friend upon her purpose broke;
To her remarks with insolence replied,
And her assertions doubted or denied:
While the meek Anna like an infant shook,
Woe-struck and trembling at the serpent's look

"There is," said Stafford, "yes, there is a cause—
"This creature frights her, overpowers, and awes."
Six weeks had pass'd—"In truth, my love, this friend
"Has liberal notions; what does she intend?
"Without a hint she came, and will she stay
"Till she receives the hint to go away?"

Confused the Wife replied, in spite of truth,
"I love the dear companion of my youth."
"'T is well," said Stafford; "then your loves renew:
"Trust me, your rivals, Anna, will be few."

Though playful this, she felt too much distress'd
T' admit the consolation of a jest.
Ill she reposed, and in her dreams would sigh,
And, murmuring forth her anguish, beg to die;
With sunken eye, slow pace, and pallid cheek,
She look'd confusion, and she fear'd to speak.

All this the Friend beheld, for, quick of sight,
She knew the husband eager for her flight;
And that by force alone she could retain
The lasting comforts she had hope to gain.
She now perceived, to win her post for life,
She must infuse fresh terrors in the wife;
Must bid to friendship's feebler ties adieu,
And boldly claim the object in her view:
She saw the husband's love, and knew the power
Her friend might use in some propitious hour.

Meantime the anxious Wife, from pure distress
Assuming courage, said, "I will confess;"
But with her children felt a parent's pride,
And sought once more the hated truth to hide.

Offended, grieved, impatient, Stafford bore
The odious change, till he could bear no more:
A friend to truth, in speech and action plain,
He held all fraud and cunning in disdain;
But fraud to find, and falsehood to detect,
For once he fled to measures indirect.

One day the Friends were seated in that room
The Guest with care adorn'd, and named her home:
To please the eye, there curious prints were placed,
And some light volumes to amuse the taste;
Letters and music on a table laid,
The favourite studies of the fair betray'd;
Beneath the window was the toilet spread,
And the fire gleam'd upon a crimson bed.

In Anna's looks and falling tears were seen
How interesting had their subjects been:
"Oh! then," resumed the Friend, "I plainly find
"That you and Stafford know each other's mind;
"I must depart, must on the world be thrown,
"Like one discarded, worthless, and unknown;
"But, shall I carry, and to please a foe,
"A painful secret in my bosom? No!
"Think not your Friend a reptile you may tread
"Beneath your feet, and say, the worm is dead;
"I have some feeling, and will not be made
"The scorn of her whom love cannot persuade:
"Would not your word, your slightest wish, effect
"All that I hope, petition, or expect?
"The power you have, but you the use decline—
"Proof that you feel not, or you fear not mine.
"There was a time when I, a tender maid,
"Flew at a call, and your desires obey'd;
"A very mother to the child became,
"Consoled your sorrow, and conceal'd your shame;
"But now, grown rich and happy, from the door
"You thrust a bosom-friend, despised and poor;
"That child alive, its mother might have known
"The hard, ungrateful spirit she has shown."

Here paused the Guest, and Anna cried at length—
"You try me, cruel friend! beyond my strength:
"Would I had been beside my infant laid,
"Where none would vex me, threaten, or upbraid!"

In Anna's looks the Friend beheld despair;
Her speech she soften'd, and composed her air;
Yet, while professing love, she answer'd still—
"You can befriend me, but you want the will."
They parted thus, and Anna went her way,
To shed her secret sorrows, and to pray.

Stafford, amused with books, and fond of home,
By reading oft dispell'd the evening gloom;
History or tale—all heard him with delight,
And thus was pass'd this memorable night.

The listening Friend bestow'd a flattering smile:
A sleeping boy the mother held the while;
And ere she fondly bore him to his bed,
On his fair face the tear of anguish shed.

And now his task resumed, "My tale," said he,
"Is short and sad, short may our sadness be!"

"The Caliph Harun,[2] as historians tell,
"Ruled, for a tyrant, admirably well;
"Where his own pleasures were not touch'd, to men
"He was humane, and sometimes even then.
"Harun was fond of fruits and gardens fair,
"And woe to all whom he found poaching there:
"Among his pages was a lively Boy,
"Eager in search of every trifling joy;
"His feelings vivid, and his fancy strong,
"He sigh'd for pleasure while he shrank from wrong:
"When by the Caliph in the garden placed,
"He saw the treasures which he long'd to taste;
"And oft alone he ventured to behold
"Rich hanging fruits with rind of glowing gold;
"Too long he stay'd forbidden bliss to view,
"His virtue failing as his longings grew;
"Athirst and wearied with the noontide heat,
"Fate to the garden led his luckless feet;
"With eager eyes and open mouth he stood,
"Smelt the sweet breath, and touch'd the fragrant food;
"The tempting beauty sparkling in the sun
"Charm'd his young sense—he ate, and was undone;
"When the fond glutton paused, his eyes around
"He turn'd, and eyes upon him turning found;
"Pleased he beheld the spy, a brother-page,
"A friend allied in office and in age;
"Who promised much that secret he would be,
"But high the price he fix'd on secrecy.

"'Were you suspected, my unhappy friend,'
"Began the Boy, 'where would your sorrows end?
"'In all the palace there is not a page
"'The Caliph would not torture in his rage:
"'I think I see thee now impaled alive,
"'Writhing in pangs—but come, my friend! revive;
"'Had some beheld you, all your purse contains
"'Could not have saved you from terrific pains;
"'I scorn such meanness; and, if not in debt,
"'Would not an asper on your folly set.'

"The hint was strong; young Osmyn search'd his store
"For bribes, and found he soon could bribe no more;
"That time arrived, for Osmyn's stock was small,
"And the young tyrant now possess'd it all;
"The cruel youth, with his companions near,
"Gave the broad hint that raised the sudden fear;
"Th' ungenerous insult now was daily shown,
"And Osmyn's peace and honest pride were flown;
"Then came augmenting woes, and fancy strong
"Drew forms of suffering, a tormenting throng;
"He felt degraded, and the struggling mind
"Dared not be free, and could not be resign'd;
"And all his pains and fervent prayers obtain'd
"Was truce from insult, while the fears remain'd.

"One day it chanced that this degraded Boy
"And Tyrant-friend were fix'd at their employ;
"Who now had thrown restraint and form aside,
"And for his bribe in plainer speech applied:

[2] The sovereign here meant is the Haroun Alraschid, or Harun al Raschid, who died early in the ninth century: he is often the hearer, and sometimes the hero, of a tale in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

" ' Long have I waited, and the last supply
" ' Was but a pittance, yet how patient I!
" ' But give me now what thy first terrors gave,
" ' My speech shall praise thee, and my silence save.'

" Osmyn had found, in many a dreadful day,
" The tyrant fiercer when he seem'd in play:
" He begg'd forbearance: ' I have not to give;
" ' Spare me awhile, although 't is pain to live:
" ' Oh! had that stolen fruit the power possess'd
" ' To war with life, I now had been at rest.'

" ' So fond of death,' replied the Boy, ' 't is plain
" ' Thou hast no certain notion of the pain;
" ' But to the Caliph were a secret shown,
" ' Death has no pain that would be then unknown.'

" Now," says the story, " in a closet near,
" The monarch seated, chanced the boys to hear;
" There oft he came, when wearied on his throne,
" To read, sleep, listen, pray, or be alone.

" The tale proceeds, when first the Caliph found
" That he was robb'd, although alone, he frown'd;
" And swore in wrath that he would send the boy
" Far from his notice, favour, or employ;
" But gentler movements soothed his ruffled mind,
" And his own failings taught him to be kind.

" Relenting thoughts then painted Osmyn young,
" His passion urgent, and temptation strong;
" And that he suffer'd from that villain-Spy
" Pains worse than death, till he desired to die;
" Then if his morals had received a stain,
" His bitter sorrows made him pure again:
" To reason, pity lent her powerful aid,
" For one so tempted, troubled, and betray'd:
" And a free pardon the glad Boy restored
" To the kind presence of a gentle lord;
" Who from his office and his country drove
" That traitor-Friend, whom pains nor pray'rs could move:
" Who raised the fears no mortal could endure,
" And then with cruel av'rice sold the cure.

" My tale is ended; but, to be applied,
" I must describe the place where Caliphs hide."

Here both the females look'd alarm'd, distress'd,
With hurried passions hard to be express'd.

" It was a closet by a chamber placed,
" Where slept a lady of no vulgar taste;
" Her friend attended in that chosen room
" That she had honour'd and proclaim'd her home;
" To please the eye were chosen pictures placed,
" And some light volumes to amuse the taste;
" Letters and music on a table laid,
" For much the lady wrote, and often play'd:
" Beneath the window was a toilet spread,
" And a fire gleam'd upon a crimson bed."

He paused, he rose; with troubled joy the Wife
Felt the new era of her changeful life;
Frankness and love appear'd in Stafford's face,
And all her trouble to delight gave place.

Twice made the Guest an effort to sustain
Her feelings, twice resumed her seat in vain,
Nor could suppress her shame, nor could support her pain:
Quick she retired, and all the dismal night
Thought of her guilt, her folly, and her flight;
Then sought unseen her miserable home,
To think of comforts lost, and brood on wants to come.[3]

TALE XVII.

RESENTMENT.[1]

She hath a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity;
Yet, notwithstanding, being incensed, is flint:
Her temper, therefore, must be well observed.
2 Henry IV.

Three or four wenches where I stood cried—" Alas! good soul!" and forgave him with all their hearts; but there is no heed to be taken of them; if Cæsar had stabbed their mothers, they would have done no less."—*Julius Cæsar.*

How dost? Art cold?
I'm cold myself.—Where is the straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. *Lear.*

Females there are of unsuspicious mind,
Easy and soft, and credulous and kind;
Who, when offended for the twentieth time,
Will hear th' offender and forgive the crime:
And there are others whom, like these to cheat,
Asks but the humblest effort of deceit;

[3] ["' The Confidant' is interesting, though not altogether pleasing. A fair one makes a slip at the early age of fifteen, which is concealed from every one but her mother and a sentimental friend from whom she could conceal nothing. Her after life is pure and exemplary; and at twenty-five she is married to a worthy man, with whom she lives in perfect innocence and concord for many happy years. At last the confidant of her childhood, whose lot has been less prosperous, starts up and importunes her for money—not forgetting to hint at the fatal secret of which she is the depository. After agonizing and plundering her for years, she at last comes and settles herself in her house, and embitters her whole existence by her selfish threats and ungenerous extortions. The husband, who had been greatly disturbed at the change in his wife's temper and spirits, at last accidentally overhears enough to put him in possession of the fact; and resolving to forgive a fault so long past and so well repaired, takes occasion to intimate his knowledge of it, and his disdain of the false confidant, in an ingenious apologue,—which, however, is plain enough to drive the pestilent visitor from his house, and to restore peace and confidence to the bosom of his grateful wife."—JEFFREY.]

[1] [It is understood that this tale was suggested by some realities in the history of Mrs. Elmy, the mother of the Poet's wife.]

But they, once injured, feel a strong disdain,
And, seldom pardoning, never trust again;
Urged by religion, they forgive—but yet
Guard the warm heart, and never more forget:
Those are like wax—apply them to the fire,
Melting, they take th' impressions you desire;
Easy to mould and fashion as you please,
And again moulded with an equal ease:
Like smelted iron *these* the forms retain,
But, once impress'd, will never melt again.

A busy port a serious Merchant made
His chosen place to recommence his trade;
And brought his Lady, who, their children dead,
Their native seat of recent sorrow fled:
The husband duly on the quay was seen,
The wife at home became at length serene;
There in short time the social couple grew
With all acquainted, friendly with a few;
When the good lady, by disease assail'd,
In vain resisted—hope and science fail'd:
Then spake the female friends, by pity led,
"Poor merchant *Paul!* what think ye? will he wed?
"A quiet, easy, kind, religious man,
"Thus can he rest?—I wonder if he can."

He too, as grief subsided in his mind,
Gave place to notions of congenial kind:
Grave was the man, as we have told before;
His years were forty—he might pass for more;
Composed his features were, his stature low,
His air important, and his motion slow:
His dress became him, it was neat and plain,
The colour purple, and without a stain;
His words were few, and special was his care
In simplest terms his purpose to declare;
A man more civil, sober, and discreet,
More grave and courteous, you could seldom meet:
Though frugal he, yet sumptuous was his board,
As if to prove how much he could afford;
For though reserved himself, he loved to see
His table plenteous, and his neighbours free:
Among these friends he sat in solemn style,
And rarely soften'd to a sober smile:
For this, observant friends their reasons gave—
"Concerns so vast would make the idlest grave;
"And for such man to be of language free,
"Would seem incongruous as a singing tree:
"Trees have their music, but the birds they shield
"The pleasing tribute for protection yield;
"Each ample tree the tuneful choir defends,
"As this rich Merchant cheers his happy friends!"

In the same town it was his chance to meet
A gentle Lady, with a mind discreet;
Neither in life's decline, nor bloom of youth,
One famed for maiden modesty and truth:
By nature cool, in pious habits bred,
She look'd on lovers with a virgin's dread:
Deceivers, rakes, and libertines were they,
And harmless beauty their pursuit and prey;
As bad as giants in the ancient times
Were modern lovers, and the same their crimes:
Soon as she heard of her all-conquering charms,
At once she fled to her defensive arms;
Conn'd o'er the tales her maiden aunt had told,
And, statue like, was motionless and cold:
From prayer of love, like that Pygmalion pray'd,
Ere the hard stone became the yielding maid,[2]
A different change in this chaste nymph ensued,
And turn'd to stone the breathing flesh and blood:
Whatever youth described his wounded heart,
"He came to rob her, and she scorn'd his art;
"And who of raptures once presumed to speak,
"Told listening maids he thought them fond and weak;
"But should a worthy man his hopes display
"In few plain words, and beg a *yes* or *nay*,
"He would deserve an answer just and plain,
"Since adulation only moved disdain—
"Sir, if my friends object not, come again."

Hence, our grave Lover, though he liked the face,
Praised not a feature—dwelt not on a grace;
But in the simplest terms declared his state:
"A widow'd man, who wish'd a virtuous mate;
"Who fear'd neglect, and was compell'd to trust
"Dependants wasteful, idle, or unjust;
"Or should they not the trusted stores destroy,
"At best, they could not help him to enjoy;
"But with her person and her prudence bless'd,
"His acts would prosper, and his soul have rest:
"Would she be his?"—"Why, that was much to say;
"She would consider; he awhile might stay:
"She liked his manners, and believed his word;
"He did not flatter, flattery she abhorr'd:
"It was her happy lot in peace to dwell—
"Would change make better what was now so well?
"But she would ponder." "This," he said, "was kind;"
And begg'd to know "when she had fix'd her mind."

Romantic maidens would have scorn'd the air,
And the cool prudence of a mind so fair;
But well it pleased this wiser maid to find
Her own mild virtues in her lover's mind.

His worldly wealth she sought, and quickly grew
Pleased with her search, and happy in the view
Of vessels freighted with abundant stores,
Of rooms whose treasures press'd the groaning floors;
And he of clerks and servants could display
A little army on a public day:
Was this a man like needy bard to speak
Of balmy lip, bright eye, or rosy cheek?

The sum appointed for her widow'd state,
Fix'd by her friend, excited no debate;
Then the kind lady gave her hand and heart,
And, never finding, never dealt with art:

[2] "Almighty gods, if all we mortals want,
If all we can require, be yours to grant;
Make this fair statue mine, he would have said,
But changed his words for shame, and only pray'd—
Give me the likeness of my ivory maid."—DRYDEN.

In his engagements she had no concern;
He taught her not, nor had she wish to learn:
On him in all occasions she relied,
His word her surety, and his worth her pride.

When ship was launch'd, and merchant Paul had share,
A bounteous feast became the lady's care;
Who then her entry to the dinner made,
In costly raiment, and with kind parade.

Call'd by this duty on a certain day,
And robed to grace it in a rich array,
Forth from her room, with measured step she came,
Proud of th' event, and stately look'd the dame:
The husband met her at his study-door—
"This way, my love—one moment, and no more:
"A trifling business—you will understand—
"The law requires that you affix your hand;
"But first attend, and you shall learn the cause
"Why forms like these have been prescribed by laws."
Then from his chair a man in black arose,
And with much quickness hurried off his prose—
That "Ellen Paul, the wife, and so forth, freed
"From all control, her own the act and deed,
"And forasmuch"——said she, "I've no distrust,
"For he that asks it is discreet and just;
"Our friends are waiting—where am I to sign?—
"There!——Now be ready when we meet to dine."

This said, she hurried off in great delight,
The ship was launch'd, and joyful was the night.

Now, says the reader, and in much disdain,
This serious Merchant was a rogue in grain;
A treacherous wretch, an artful sober knave,
And ten times worse for manners cool and grave;
And she devoid of sense, to set her hand
To scoundrel deeds she could not understand.

Alas! 't is true; and I in vain had tried
To soften crime that cannot be denied;
And might have labour'd many a tedious verse
The latent cause of mischief to rehearse:
Be it confess'd, that long, with troubled look,
This Trader view'd a huge accompting-book;
(His former marriage for a time delay'd
The dreaded hour, the present lent its aid;)
But he too clearly saw the evil day,
And put the terror, by deceit, away;
Thus, by connecting with his sorrows crime,
He gain'd a portion of uneasy time.—
All this too late the injured Lady saw;
What law had given, again she gave to law;
His guilt, her folly—these at once impress'd
Their lasting feelings on her guileless breast.

"Shame I can bear," she cried, "and want sustain,
"But will not see this guilty wretch again:"
For all was lost, and he with many a tear
Confess'd the fault—she turning scorn'd to hear.
To legal claims he yielded all his worth,
But small the portion, and the wrong'd were wroth,
Nor to their debtor would a part allow;
And where to live he knew not—knew not how.

The Wife a cottage found, and thither went
The suppliant man, but she would not relent:
Thenceforth she utter'd with indignant tone,
"I feel the misery, and will feel alone."
He would turn servant for her sake, would keep
The poorest school, the very streets would sweep,
To show his love. "It was already shown,
"And her affliction should be all her own:
"His wants and weakness might have touch'd her heart,
"But from his meanness she resolved to part."

In a small alley was she lodged, beside
Its humblest poor, and at the view she cried,
"Welcome—yes! let me welcome, if I can,
"The fortune dealt me by this cruel man:
"Welcome this low thatch'd roof, this shatter'd door,
"These walls of clay, this miserable floor;
"Welcome my envied neighbours; this to you
"Is all familiar—all to me is new:
"You have no hatred to the loathsome meal,
"Your firmer nerves no trembling terrors feel,
"Nor, what you must expóse, desire you to conceal;
"What your coarse feelings bear without offence,
"Disgusts my taste and poisons every sense:
"Daily shall I your sad relations hear
"Of wanton women and of men severe;
"There will dire curses, dreadful oaths abound,
"And vile expressions shock me and confound:
"Noise of dull wheels, and songs with horrid words,
"Will be the music that this lane affords;
"Mirth that disgusts, and quarrels that degrade
"The human mind, must my retreat invade:
"Hard is my fate! yet easier to sustain,
"Than to abide with guilt and fraud again;
"A grave impostor! who expects to meet,
"In such grey locks and gravity, deceit?
"Where the sea rages and the billows roar,
"Men know the danger, and they quit the shore;
"But, be there nothing in the way descried,
"When o'er the rocks smooth runs the wicked tide—
"Sinking unwarn'd, they execrate the shock
"And the dread peril of the sunken rock."

A frowning world had now the man to dread,
Taught in no arts, to no profession bred:
Pining in grief, beset with constant care,
Wandering he went, to rest he knew not where.

Meantime the Wife—but she abjured the name—
Endured her lot, and struggled with the shame;
When, lo! an uncle on the mother's side,
In nature something, as in blood allied,
Admired her firmness, his protection gave,
And show'd a kindness she disdain'd to crave.

Frugal and rich the man, and frugal grew
The sister-mind without a selfish view;
And further still—the temp'rate pair agreed
With what they saved the patient poor to feed:
His whole estate, when to the grave consign'd,
Left the good kinsman to the kindred mind;

Assured that law, with spell secure and tight,
Had fix'd it as her own peculiar right.

Now to her ancient residence removed,
She lived as widow, well endowed and loved;
Decent her table was, and to her door
Came daily welcomed the neglected poor:
The absent sick were soothed by her relief,
As her free bounty sought the haunts of grief;
A plain and homely charity had she,
And loved the objects of her alms to see;
With her own hands she dress'd the savoury meat,
With her own fingers wrote the choice receipt;
She heard all tales that injured wives relate,
And took a double interest in their fate;
But of all husbands not a wretch was known
So vile, so mean, so cruel as her own.

This bounteous Lady kept an active spy,
To search th' abodes of want, and to supply;
The gentle *Susan* served the liberal dame—
Unlike their notions, yet their deeds the same:
No practised villain could a victim find
Than this stern Lady more completely blind;
Nor (if detected in his fraud) could meet
One less disposed to pardon a deceit;
The wrong she treasured, and on no pretence
Received th' offender, or forgot th' offence:
But the kind Servant, to the thrice-proved knave
A fourth time listen'd, and the past forgave.

First in her youth, when she was blithe and gay,
Came a smooth rogue, and stole her love away;
Then to another and another flew,
To boast the wanton mischief he could do:
Yet she forgave him, though so great her pain,
That she was never blithe or gay again.

Then came a spoiler, who, with villain-art,
Implored her hand, and agonized her heart;
He seized her purse, in idle waste to spend
With a vile wanton, whom she call'd her friend;
Five years she suffer'd—he had revell'd five—
Then came to show her he was just alive;
Alone he came, his vile companion dead,
And he, a wand'ring pauper, wanting bread;
His body wasted, wither'd life and limb,
When this kind soul became a slave to him:
Nay, she was sure that, should he now survive,
No better husband would be left alive;
For him she mourn'd, and then, alone and poor,
Sought and found comfort at her Lady's door:
Ten years she served, and, mercy her employ,
Her tasks were pleasure, and her duty joy.

Thus lived the Mistress and the Maid, design'd
Each other's aid—one cautious, and both kind:
Oft at their window, working, they would sigh
To see the aged and the sick go by;
Like wounded bees, that at their home arrive
Slowly and weak, but labouring for the hive.

The busy people of a mason's yard
The curious Lady view'd with much regard;
With steady motion she perceived them draw
Through blocks of stone the slowly-working saw;
It gave her pleasure and surprise to see
Among these men the signs of revelry:
Cold was the season, and confined their view,
Tedious their tasks, but merry were the crew:
There she beheld an aged pauper wait,
Patient and still, to take an humble freight;
Within the panniers on an ass he laid
The ponderous grit, and for the portion paid;
This he re-sold, and, with each trifling gift,
Made shift to live, and wretched was the shift.

Now will it be by every reader told
Who was this humble trader, poor and old.—
In vain an author would a name suppress,
From the least hint a reader learns to guess;
Of children lost, our novels sometimes treat,
We never care—assured again to meet:
In vain the writer for concealment tries,
We trace his purpose under all disguise;
Nay, though he tells us they are dead and gone,
Of whom we wot, they will appear anon;
Our favourites fight, are wounded, hopeless lie,
Survive they cannot—nay, they cannot die;
Now, as these tricks and stratagems are known,
'T is best, at once, the simple truth to own.

This was the Husband—in an humble shed
He nightly slept, and daily sought his bread:
Once for relief the weary man applied;
"Your wife is rich," the angry vestry cried:
Alas! he dared not to his wife complain,
Feeling her wrongs, and fearing her disdain:
By various methods he had tried to live,
But not one effort would subsistence give:
He was an usher in a school, till noise
Made him less able than the weaker boys;
On messages he went, till he in vain
Strove names, or words, or meanings to retain;
Each small employment in each neighbouring town,
By turn he took, to lay as quickly down;
For, such his fate, he fail'd in all he plann'd,
And nothing prosper'd in his luckless hand.

At his old home, his motive half suppress'd,
He sought no more for riches, but for rest:
There lived the bounteous Wife, and at her gate
He saw in cheerful groups the needy wait;
"Had he a right with bolder hope t' apply?"
He ask'd—was answer'd, and went groaning by:
For some remains of spirit, temper, pride,
Forbade a prayer he knew would be denied.

Thus was the grieving man, with burthen'd ass,
Seen day by day along the street to pass:
"Who is he, Susan? who the poor old man?
"He never calls—do make him, if you can."
The conscious damsel still delay'd to speak,
She stopp'd confused, and had her words to seek;
From Susan's fears the fact her mistress knew,
And cried—"The wretch! what scheme has he in view?
"Is this his lot?—but let him, let him feel—
"Who wants the courage, not the will, to steal."

A dreadful winter came, each day severe,
Misty when mild, and icy cold when clear;
And still the humble dealer took his load,
Returning slow, and shivering on the road:

The Lady, still relentless, saw him come,
And said—"I wonder, has the wretch a home?"—
"A hut! a hovel!" "Then his fate appears
"To suit his crime."—"Yes, lady, not his years;—
"No! nor his sufferings—nor that form decay'd."
"Well! let the parish give its paupers aid:
"You must the vileness of his acts allow."—
"And you, dear lady, that he feels it now."
"When such dissemblers on their deeds reflect,
"Can they the pity they refused expect?
"He that doth evil, evil shall he dread."—
"The snow," quoth Susan, "falls upon his bed—
"It blows beside the thatch—it melts upon his head."
"'Tis weakness, child, for grieving guilt to feel."—
"Yes, but he never sees a wholesome meal;
"Through his bare dress appears his shrivell'd skin,
"And ill he fares without, and worse within:
"With that weak body, lame, diseased, and slow,
"What cold, pain, peril, must the sufferer know!"
"Think on his crime."—"Yes, sure 't was very wrong;
"But look (God bless him!) how he gropes along."
"Brought me to shame."—"Oh! yes, I know it all—
"What cutting blast! and he can scarcely crawl;
"He freezes as he moves—he dies! if he should fall:
"With cruel fierceness drives this icy sleet—
"And must a Christian perish in the street,
"In sight of Christians?—There! at last, he lies;—
"Nor unsupported can he ever rise:
"He cannot live." "But is he fit to die?"—
Here Susan softly mutter'd a reply,
Look'd round the room—said something of its state,
Dives the rich, and Lazarus at his gate;
And then aloud—"In pity do behold
"The man affrighten'd, weeping, trembling, cold:
"Oh! how those flakes of snow their entrance win
"Through the poor rags, and keep the frost within.
"His very heart seems frozen as he goes,
"Leading that starved companion of his woes:
"He tried to pray—his lips, I saw them move,
"And he so turn'd his piteous looks above;
"But the fierce wind the willing heart opposed,
"And, ere he spoke, the lips in misery closed:
"Poor-suffering object! yes, for ease you pray'd,
"And God will hear—He only, I'm afraid."

"Peace! Susan, peace! pain ever follows sin."—
"Ah! then," thought Susan, "when will ours begin?
"When reach'd his home, to what a cheerless fire
"And chilling bed will those cold limbs retire!
"Yet ragged, wretched as it is, that bed
"Takes half the space of his contracted shed;
"I saw the thorns beside the narrow grate,
"With straw collected in a putrid state:
"There will he, kneeling, strive the fire to raise,
"And that will warm him, rather than the blaze:
"The sullen, smoky blaze, that cannot last
"One moment after his attempt is past:
"And I so warmly and so purely laid,
"To sink to rest—indeed, I am afraid."
"Know you his conduct?"—"Yes, indeed I know,
"And how he wanders in the wind and snow;
"Safe in our rooms the threat'ning storm we hear,
"But he feels strongly what we faintly fear."
"Wilful was rich, and he the storm defied;
"Wilful is poor, and must the storm abide,"
Said the stern Lady; "'t is in vain to feel;
"Go and prepare the chicken for our meal."

Susan her task reluctantly began,
And utter'd as she went—"The poor old man!"
But while her soft and ever-yielding heart
Made strong protest against her lady's part,
The lady's self began to think it wrong
To feel so wrathful and resent so long.

"No more the wretch would she receive again,
"No more behold him—but she would sustain;
"Great his offence, and evil was his mind—
"But he had suffer'd, and she would be kind:
"She spurn'd such baseness, and she found within
"A fair acquittal from so foul a sin;
"Yet she too err'd, and must of Heaven expect
"To be rejected, him should she reject."

Susan was summon'd—"I'm about to do
"A foolish act, in part seduced by you;
"Go to the creature—say that I intend,
"Foe to his sins, to be his sorrow's friend:
"Take, for his present comforts, food and wine,
"And mark his feelings at this act of mine:
"Observe if shame be o'er his features spread,
"By his own victim to be soothed and fed;
"But, this inform him, that it is not love
"That prompts my heart, that duties only move:
"Say, that no merits in his favour plead,
"But miseries only, and his abject need;
"Nor bring me grov'ling thanks, nor high-flown praise;
"I would his spirits, not his fancy, raise:
"Give him no hope that I shall ever more
"A man so vile to my esteem restore;
"But warn him rather, that, in time of rest,
"His crimes be all remember'd and confess'd:
"I know not all that form the sinner's debt,
"But there is one that he must not forget."

The mind of Susan prompted her with speed
To act her part in every courteous deed:
All that was kind she was prepared to say,
And keep the lecture for a future day;
When he had all life's comforts by his side,
Pity might sleep, and good advice be tried.

This done, the mistress felt disposed to look,
As self-approving, on a pious book;
Yet, to her native bias still inclined,
She felt her act too merciful and kind;
But when, long musing on the chilling scene
So lately past—the frost and sleet so keen—
The man's whole misery in a single view—
Yes! she could think some pity was his due.

Thus fix'd, she heard not her attendant glide
With soft slow step—till, standing by her side,
The trembling servant gasp'd for breath, and shed
Relieving tears, then utter'd, "He is dead!"

"Dead!" said the startled Lady.—"Yes, he fell
"Close at the door where he was wont to dwell;
"There his sole friend, the Ass, was standing by,
"Half dead himself, to see his Master die."

"Expired he then, good Heaven! for want of food?"—
"No! crusts and water in a corner stood:—
"To have this plenty, and to wait so long,
"And to be right too late, is doubly wrong:
"Then, every day to see him totter by,
"And to forbear—Oh! what a heart had I!"

"Blame me not, child; I tremble at the news."
"'T is my own heart," said Susan, "I accuse:
"To have this money in my purse—to know
"What grief was his, and what to grief we owe;
"To see him often, always to conceive
"How he must pine and languish, groan and grieve,
"And every day in case and peace to dine,
"And rest in comfort!—What a heart is mine!" [3]

TALE XVIII.

THE WAGER.

'Tis thought your deer doth hold you at a bay.

I choose her for myself;
If she and I are pleased, what 's that to you?

Let 's send each one to his wife,
And he whose wife is most obedient
Shall win the wager.

Now by the world it is a lusty wench,
I love her ten times more than e'er I did.
Taming of the Shrew.

COUNTER and CLUBB were men in trade, whose pains,
Credit, and prudence, brought them constant gains;
Partners and punctual, every friend agreed
Counter and Clubb were men who must succeed.

When they had fix'd some little time in life,
Each thought of taking to himself a wife:
As men in trade alike, as men in love,
They seem'd with no according views to move;
As certain ores in outward view the same,
They show'd their difference when the magnet came.
Counter was vain: with spirit strong and high,
'T was not in him like suppliant swain to sigh:
"His wife might o'er his men and maids preside,
"And in her province be a judge and guide;
"But what he thought, or did, or wish'd to do,
"She must not know, or censure if she knew;
"At home, abroad, by day, by night, if he
"On aught determined, so it was to be:
"How is a man," he ask'd, "for business fit,
"Who to a female can his will submit?
"Absent a while, let no inquiring eye
"Or plainer speech presume to question why:
"But all be silent, and, when seen again,
"Let all be cheerful—shall a wife complain?
"Friends I invite, and who shall dare t' object,
"Or look on them with coolness or neglect?
"No! I must ever of my house be head,
"And, thus obey'd, I condescend to wed."

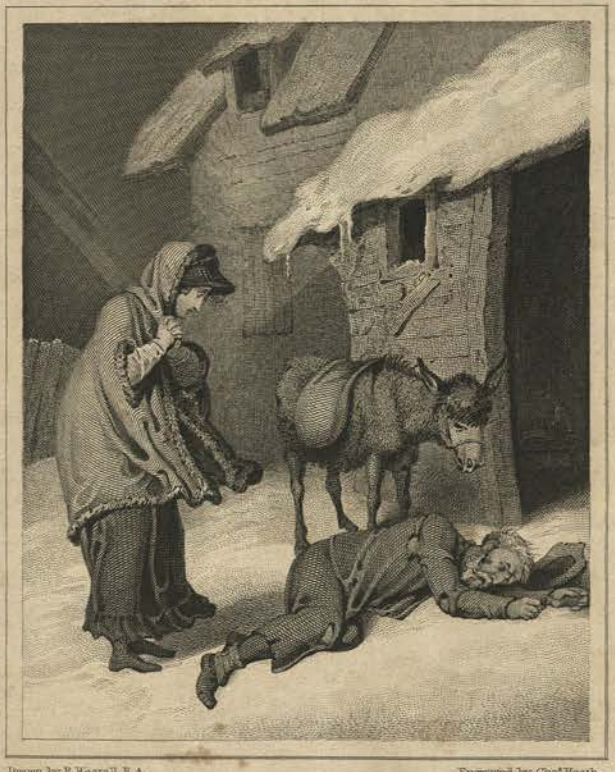
Clubb heard the speech—"My friend is nice, said he;
"A wife with less respect will do for me:
"How is he certain such a prize to gain?
"What he approves, a lass may learn to feign,
"And so affect t' obey till she begins to reign;
"A while complying, she may vary then,
"And be as wives of more unwary men;
"Beside, to him who plays such lordly part,
"How shall a tender creature yield her heart;
"Should he the promised confidence refuse,
"She may another more confiding choose;
"May show her anger, yet her purpose hide,
"And wake his jealousy, and wound his pride.
"In one so humbled, who can trace the friend?
"I on an equal, not a slave, depend;
"If true, my confidence is wisely placed,
"And being false, she only is disgraced."

Clubb, with these notions, cast his eye around
And one so easy soon a partner found.
The lady chosen was of good repute;
Meekness she had not, and was seldom mute;
Though quick to anger, still she loved to smile,
And would be calm if men would wait a while:
She knew her duty, and she loved her way,
More pleased in truth to govern than obey;

[3] ['Resentment' is one of the pieces in which Mr. Crabbe has exercised his extraordinary powers of giving pain,—though not gratuitously in this instance, nor without inculcating a strong lesson of forgiveness and compassion. A middle-aged merchant marries a lady of good fortune, and persuades her to make it all over to him when he is on the eve of bankruptcy. He is reduced to utter beggary: and his wife, bitterly and deeply resenting the wrong he had done her, renounces all connection with him, and endures her own reverses with magnanimity. At last a distant relation leaves her his fortune; and she returns to the enjoyment of moderate wealth, and the exercise of charity to all but her miserable husband. Broken by age and disease, he now begs the waste sand from the stone-cutters, and sells it on an ass through the streets:—

"And from each trifling gift
Made shift to live—and wretched was the shift."

The unrelenting wife descries him creeping through the wet at this miserable employment; but still withholds all relief, in spite of the touching entreaties of her compassionate handmaid, whose nature is as kind and yielding, as that of her mistress is hard and inflexible. Of all the pictures of mendicant poverty that have ever been brought forward in prose or verse—in charity sermons or popular harangues—we know of none half so moving or complete, so powerful, and so true, as is contained in sundry passages of this tale.—JEFFREY.]



Drawn by R. Westall, R.A. Engraved by Chas. Heath.

TALES.

'HE FELL
'CLOSE AT THE DOOR WHERE HE WAS WONT TO DWELL;
'THERE HIS SOLE FRIEND, THE ASS, WAS STANDING BY,
'HALF DEAD HIMSELF, TO SEE HIS MASTER DIE.'

Tale 17.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET. 1860.

She heard her priest with reverence, and her spouse
As one who felt the pressure of her vows;
Useful and civil, all her friends confess'd—
Give her her way, and she would choose the best;
Though some indeed a sly remark would make—
Give it her not, and she would choose to take.

All this, when Clubb some cheerful months had spent,
He saw, confess'd, and said he was content.

Counter meantime selected, doubted, weigh'd,
And then brought home a young complying maid;
A tender creature, full of fears as charms,
A beauteous nursling from its mother's arms;
A soft, sweet blossom, such as men must love,
But to preserve must keep it in the stove:
She had a mild, subdued, expiring look—
Raise but the voice, and this fair creature shook;
Leave her alone, she felt a thousand fears—
Chide, and she melted into floods of tears;
Fondly she pleaded, and would gently sigh,
For very pity, or she knew not why;
One whom to govern none could be afraid—
Hold up the finger, this meek thing obey'd;
Her happy husband had the easiest task—
Say but his will, no question would she ask;
She sought no reasons, no affairs she knew,
Of business spoke not, and had nought to do.

Oft he exclaim'd, "How meek! how mild! how kind!
"With her 'twere cruel but to seem unkind:
"Though ever silent when I take my leave,
"It pains my heart to think how hers will grieve;
"'T is heaven on earth with such a wife to dwell,
"I am in raptures to have sped so well;
"But let me not, my friend, your envy raise,
"No! on my life, your patience has my praise."

His Friend, though silent, felt the scorn implied—
"What need of patience?" to himself he cried:
"Better a woman o'er her house to rule,
"Than a poor child just hurried from her school;
"Who has no care, yet never lives at ease;
"Unfit to rule, and indisposed to please.
"What if he govern, there his boast should end;
"No husband's power can make a slave his friend."

It was the custom of these Friends to meet
With a few neighbours in a neighbouring street;
Where Counter ofttimes would occasion seize
To move his silent Friend by words like these:
"A man," said he, "if govern'd by his wife,
"Gives up his rank and dignity in life;
"Now, better fate befalls my Friend and me."—
He spoke, and look'd th' approving smile to see.

The quiet partner, when he chose to speak,
Desired his friend "another theme to seek;
"When thus they met, he judged that state-affairs
"And such important subjects should be theirs:"
But still the partner, in his lighter vein,
Would cause in Clubb affliction or disdain;
It made him anxious to detect the cause
Of all that boasting:—"Wants my friend applause?
"This plainly proves him not at perfect ease,
"For, felt he pleasure, he would wish to please.
"These triumphs here for some regrets atone—
"Men who are bless'd let other men alone."
Thus made suspicious, he observed and saw
His friend each night at early hour withdraw;
He sometimes mention'd Juliet's tender nerves,
And what attention such a wife deserves:
"In this," thought Clubb, "full sure some mystery lies—
"He laughs at me, yet he with much complies,
"And all his vaunts of bliss are proud apologies."

With such ideas treasured in his breast,
He grew composed, and let his anger rest;
Till Counter once (when wine so long went round,
That friendship and discretion both were drown'd)
Began, in teasing and triumphant mood,
His evening banter:—"Of all earthly good,
"The best," he said, "was an obedient spouse,
"Such as my friend's—that every one allows:
"What if she wishes his designs to know?
"It is because she would her praise bestow;
"What if she wills that he remain at home?
"She knows that mischief may from travel come.
"I, who am free to venture where I please,
"Have no such kind preventing checks as these;
"But mine is double duty, first to guide
"Myself aright, then rule a house beside;
"While this our friend, more happy than the free,
"Resigns all power, and laughs at liberty."

"By Heaven!" said Clubb, "excuse me if I swear,
"I 'll bet a hundred guineas, if he dare,
"That uncontroll'd I will such freedoms take
"That he will fear to equal—there 's my stake."

"A match!" said Counter, much by wine inflamed;
"But we are friends—let smaller stake be named:
"Wine for our future meeting, that will I
"Take and no more—what peril shall we try?"
"Let 's to Newmarket," Clubb replied; "or choose
"Yourself the place, and what you like to lose;
"And he who first returns, or fears to go,
"Forfeits his cash."—Said Counter, "Be it so."

The friends around them saw with much delight
The social war, and hail'd the pleasant night;
Nor would they further hear the cause discuss'd,
Afraid the recreant heart of Clubb to trust.

Now sober thoughts return'd as each withdrew,
And of the subject took a serious view;
"'T was wrong," thought Counter, "and will grieve my love;"
"'T was wrong," thought Clubb, "my wife will not approve:
"But friends were present; I must try the thing,
"Or with my folly half the town will ring."

He sought his lady—"Madam, I 'm to blame,
"But was reproach'd, and could not bear the shame;

" Here in my folly—for 't is best to say
" The very truth—I 've sworn to have my way;
" To that Newmarket—(though I hate the place,
" And have no taste or talents for a race,
" Yet so it is—well, now prepare to chide)—
" I laid a wager that I dared to ride;
" And I must go: by Heaven, if you resist
" I shall be scorn'd, and ridiculed, and hiss'd;
" Let me with grace before my friends appear,
" You know the truth, and must not be severe:
" He too must go, but that he will of course:
" Do you consent?—I never think of force."

" You never need," the worthy Dame replied;
" The husband's honour is the woman's pride:
" If I in trifles be the wilful wife,
" Still for your credit I would lose my life.
" Go! and when fix'd the day of your return,
" Stay longer yet, and let the blockheads learn
" That though a wife may sometimes wish to rule,
" She would not make th' indulgent man a fool;
" I would at times advise—but idle they
" Who think th' assenting husband *must* obey."

The happy man, who thought his lady right
In other cases, was assured to-night;
Then for the day with proud delight prepared,
To show his doubting friends how much he dared.

Counter—who grieving sought his bed, his rest
Broken by pictures of his love distress'd—
With soft and winning speech the fair prepared:
" She all his councils, comforts, pleasures shared:
" She was assured he loved her from his soul,
" She never knew and need not fear control;
" But so it happen'd—he was grieved at heart,
" It happen'd so, that they awhile must part—
" A little time—the distance was but short,
" And business call'd him—he despised the sport;
" But to Newmarket he engaged to ride
" With his friend Clubb:" and there he stopp'd
and sigh'd.

Awhile the tender creature look'd dismay'd,
Then floods of tears the call of grief obey'd:—

" She an objection! No!" she sobb'd, " not one;
" Her work was finish'd, and her race was run;
" For die she must, indeed she would not live
" A week alone, for all the world could give;
" He too must die in that same wicked place;
" It always happen'd—was a common case;
" Among those horrid horses, jockeys, crowds,
" 'T was certain death—they might bespeak their
shrouds;
" He would attempt a race, be sure to fall—
" And she expire with terror—that was all:
" With love like hers she was indeed unfit
" To bear such horrors, but she must submit."

" But for three days, my love! three days at
most."
" Enough for me; I then shall be a ghost."
" My honour's pledged!"—" Oh! yes, my dearest
life,
" I know your honour must outweigh your wife;
" But ere this absence have you sought a friend?
" I shall be dead—on whom can you depend?
" Let me one favour of your kindness crave,
" Grant me the stone I mention'd for my grave."

" Nay, love, attend—why, bless my soul—I say
" I will return—there—weep no longer—nay!"
" Well! I obey, and to the last am true,
" But spirits fail me; I must die; adieu!"

" What, Madam! must?—'t is wrong—I 'm
angry—zounds!
" Can I remain and lose a thousand pounds?"

" Go then, my love! it is a monstrous sum,
" Worth twenty wives—go, love! and I am dumb;
" Nor be displeased—had I the power to live,
" You might be angry, now you must forgive:
" Alas! I faint—ah! cruel—there's no need
" Of wounds or fevers—this has done the deed."

The lady fainted, and the husband sent
For every aid, for every comfort went;
Strong terror seized him: " Oh! she loved so
well,
" And who th' effect of tenderness could tell?"

She now recover'd, and again began
With accent querulous—" Ah! cruel man!"
Till the sad husband, conscience-struck, confess'd,
'T was very wicked with his friend to jest;
For now he saw that those who were obey'd,
Could like the most subservient feel afraid:
And though a wife might not dispute the will
Of her liege lord, she could prevent it still.

The morning came, and Clubb prepared to ride
With a smart boy, his servant, and his guide;
When, ere he mounted on his ready steed,
Arrived a letter, and he stopp'd to read.

" My friend," he read, " our journey I decline,
" A heart too tender for such strife is mine;
" Yours is the triumph, be you so inclined;
" But you are too considerate and kind:
" In tender pity to my Juliet's fears
" I thus relent, o'ercome by love and tears;
" She knows your kindness; I have heard her say,
" A man like you 't is pleasure to obey:
" Each faithful wife, like ours, must disapprove
" Such dangerous trifling with connubial love;
" What has the idle world, my friend, to do
" With our affairs? they envy me and you:
" What if I could my gentle spouse command—
" Is that a cause I should her tears withstand?
" And what if you, a friend of peace, submit
" To one you love—is that a theme for wit?
" 'T was wrong, and I shall henceforth judge it
weak
" Both of submission and control to speak:
" Be it agreed that all contention cease,
" And no such follies vex our future peace;
" Let each keep guard against domestic strife,
" And find nor slave nor tyrant in his wife."

" Agreed," said Clubb, " with all my soul
agreed;"—
And to the boy, delighted, gave his steed.
" I think my friend has well his mind express'd,
" And I assent; such things are not a jest."

" True," said the Wife, " no longer he can hide
" The truth that pains him by his wounded pride :
" Your friend has found it not an easy thing,
" Beneath his yoke this yielding soul to bring :
" These weeping willows, though they seem inclined
" By every breeze, yet not the strongest wind
" Can from their bent divert this weak but stub-
born kind ;
" Drooping they seek your pity to excite,
" But 't is at once their nature and delight ;
" Such women feel not ; while they sigh and weep,
" 'T is but their habit—their affections sleep ;
" They are like ice that in the hand we hold,
" So very melting, yet so very cold ;
" On such affection let not man rely,
" The husbands suffer, and the ladies sigh :
" But your friend's offer let us kindly take,
" And spare his pride for his vexation's sake ;
" For he has found, and through his life will find,
" 'T is easiest dealing with the firmest mind—
" More just when it resists, and, when it yields,
more kind."

TALE XIX.

THE CONVERT.[1]

A tapster is a good trade, and an old cloak makes a new jerkin ; a withered serving-man, a fresh tapster.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

A fellow, sir, that I have known go about with my trol-my-dames.—*Winter's Tale.*

I myself, sometimes leaving the fear of Heaven on the left hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am forced to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Yea, and at that very moment,
Consideration like an angel came,
And whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him.—*Henry V.*

I have lived long enough : my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf ;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have. *Macbeth.*

Some to our Hero have a hero's name
Denied, because no father's he could claim ;
Nor could his mother with precision state
A full fair claim to her certificate ;
On her own word the marriage must depend—
A point she was not eager to defend :
But who, without a father's name, can raise
His own so high, deserves the greater praise :
The less advantage to the strife he brought,
The greater wonders has his prowess wrought ;
He who depends upon his wind and limbs,
Needs neither cork or bladder when he swims ;
Nor will by empty breath be puff'd along,
As not himself—but in his helpers—strong.

Suffice it then, our Hero's name was clear,
For, call *John Dighton*, and he answer'd " Here !"
But who that name in early life assign'd
He never found, he never tried to find :
Whether his kindred were to John disgrace,
Or John to them, is a disputed case ;
His infant-state owed nothing to their care—
His mind neglected, and his body bare ;[2]
All his success must on himself depend,
He had no money, counsel, guide, or friend ;
But in a market-town an active boy
Appear'd, and sought in various ways employ ;
Who soon, thus cast upon the world, began
To show the talents of a thriving man.

With spirit high John learn'd the world to brave,
And in both senses was a ready knave ;
Knave as of old, obedient, keen, and quick,
Knave as at present, skill'd to shift and trick ;
Some humble part of many trades he caught,
He for the builder and the painter wrought ;
For serving-maids on secret errands ran,
The waiter's helper, and the ostler's man ;
And when he chanced (oft chanced he) place to lose,
His varying genius shone in blacking shoes :
A midnight fisher by the pond he stood,
Assistant poacher, he o'erlook'd the wood ;
At an election John's impartial mind
Was to no cause nor candidate confined ;
To all in turn he full allegiance swore,
And in his hat the various badges bore :
His liberal soul with every sect agreed,
Unheard their reasons, he received their creed ;
At church he deign'd the organ-pipes to fill,
And at the meeting sang both loud and shrill :
But the full purse these different merits gain'd,
By strong demands his lively passions drain'd ;
Liquors he loved of each inflaming kind,
To midnight revels flew with ardent mind ;
Too warm at cards, a losing game he play'd,
To fleecing beauty his attention paid ;[3]
His boiling passions were by oaths express'd,
And lies he made his profit and his jest.

Such was the boy, and such the man had been,
But fate or happier fortune changed the scene ;

[1] [This tale was suggested by some passages in that extraordinary work, 'The Memoirs of the Forty-five first Years of the Life of James Lackington, Bookseller, written by Himself,' London, 8vo. 1791.]

[2] [" Neither myself, my brothers, or sisters, are indebted to a father scarcely for anything that can endear his memory, or cause us to reflect on him with pleasure. His habitual drunkenness shortened his days. My mother then became so poor, that she could not afford two pence per week for my schooling."—LACKINGTON, p. 33.]

[3] [" I was first converted to Methodism at sixteen, and from that time until I was twenty-one I was a sincere enthusiast, meeting in societies, learning hymns, &c. But, alas ! my godly life at length suffered interruption, and I entered into scenes of riot and dissipation. I became acquainted with, or infatuated by, the beautiful Nancy Trott, and could not resist the fair tempter," &c.—*Ibid.*, p. 79.]

A fever seized him, "He should surely die—"
He fear'd, and lo! a friend was praying by;
With terror moved, this Teacher he address'd,
And all the errors of his youth confess'd:
The good man kindly clear'd the Sinner's way
To lively hope, and counsell'd him to pray;
Who then resolved, should he from sickness rise,
To quit cards, liquors, poaching, oaths, and lies:
His health restored, he yet resolved, and grew
True to his masters, to their Meeting true;
His old companions at his sober face
Laugh'd loud, while he, attesting it was grace,
With tears besought them all his calling to embrace:[4]
To his new friends such Convert gave applause,
Life to their zeal, and glory to their cause:
Though terror wrought the mighty change, yet strong
Was the impression, and it lasted long;
John at the lectures due attendance paid,
A convert meek, obedient, and afraid;
His manners strict, though form'd on fear alone,
Pleased the grave friends, nor less his solemn tone,
The lengthen'd face of care, the low and inward groan;
The stern good men exulted when they saw
Those timid looks of penitence and awe;
Nor thought that one so passive, humble, meek,
Had yet a creed and principles to seek.

The Faith that Reason finds, confirms, avows,
The hopes, the views, the comforts she allows—
These were not his, who by his feelings found,
And by them only, that his faith was sound;
Feelings of terror these, for evil past,
Feelings of hope to be received at last;
Now weak, now lively, changing with the day—
These were his feelings, and he felt his way.

Sprung from such sources, will this faith remain
While these supporters can their strength retain:
As heaviest weights the deepest rivers pass,
While icy chains fast bind the solid mass;
So, born of feelings, faith remains secure,
Long as their firmness and their strength endure;
But when the waters in their channel glide,
A bridge must bear us o'er the threat'ning tide;
Such bridge is Reason, and there Faith relies,
Whether the varying spirits fall or rise.

His patrons, still disposed their aid to lend,
Behind a counter placed their humble friend,
Where pens and paper were on shelves display'd,
And pious pamphlets on the windows laid:[5]
By nature active, and from vice restrain'd,
Increasing trade his bolder views sustain'd;
His friends and teachers, finding so much zeal
In that young convert whom they taught to feel,
His trade encouraged, and were pleased to find
A hand so ready, with such humble mind.

And now, his health restored, his spirits eased,
He wish'd to marry, if the teachers pleased.
They, not unwilling, from the virgin-class
Took him a comely and a courteous lass;
Simple and civil, loving and beloved,
She long a fond and faithful partner proved;
In every year the elders and the priest
Were duly summon'd to a christening feast;
Nor came a babe, but by his growing trade
John had provision for the coming made;
For friends and strangers all were pleased to deal
With one whose care was equal to his zeal.

In human friendships, it compels a sigh
To think what trifles will dissolve the tie.
John, now become a master of his trade,
Perceived how much improvement might be made;
And as this prospect open'd to his view,
A certain portion of his zeal withdrew;
His fear abated—"What had he to fear—
"His profits certain, and his conscience clear?"
Above his door a board was placed by John,
And "Dighton, Stationer," was gilt thereon;
His window next, enlarged to twice the size,
Shone with such trinkets as the simple prize;
While in the shop with pious works were seen
The last new play, review, or magazine:
In orders punctual, he observed—"The books
"He never read, and could he judge their looks?
"Readers and critics should their merits try,
"He had no office but to sell and buy;
"Like other traders, profit was his care;
"Of what they print, the authors must beware."
He held his patrons and his teachers dear,
But with his trade they must not interfere.

'T was certain now that John had lost the dread
And pious thoughts that once such terrors bred;
His habits varied, and he more inclined
To the vain world, which he had half resign'd:
He had moreover in his brethren seen,
Or he imagined, craft, conceit, and spleen;
"They are but men," said John, "and shall I then
"Fear man's control, or stand in awe of men?
"'T is their advice (their Convert's rule and law),
"And good it is—I will not stand in awe."

Moreover Dighton, though he thought of books
As one who chiefly on the title looks,
Yet sometimes ponder'd o'er a page to find,
When vex'd with cares, amusement for his mind;
And by degrees that mind had treasured much
From works his teachers were afraid to touch:

[4] ["I now grew weary of dissipating my time, and, for want of something else to do, I went one evening to meeting; and as there was a kind of vacuity in my mind, when I came to hear the preacher, all my fanatical notions returned full upon me, and I was once more carried away by the tide of enthusiasm. My friends saw with indignation the wonderful alteration in me, who from a gay, dissipated, young fellow, was at once metamorphosed into a dull, moping, praying, psalm-singing fanatic, continually reprehending all about me for their harmless mirth and gaiety."—LACKINGTON, page 94.]

[5] ["As we sat at work in our room, Mr. Boyd, one of Mr. Wesley's people, called and informed me that a little shop was to be let. I observed to him that I loved books, and that if I could but be a bookseller I should then have plenty of books to read. On this, he assured me that he would get the shop for me," &c.—*Ibid.*, p. 130.]

Satiric novels, poets bold and free,
And what their writers term philosophy;[6]
All these were read, and he began to feel
Some self-approval on his bosom steal.
Wisdom creates humility, but he
Who thus collects it will not humble be:
No longer John was fill'd with pure delight
And humble reverence in a pastor's sight;
Who, like a grateful zealot, listening stood,
To hear a man so friendly and so good;
But felt the dignity of one who made
Himself important by a thriving trade:
And growing pride in Dighton's mind was bred
By the strange food on which it coarsely fed.

Their Brother's fall the grieving Brethren heard—
His pride indeed to all around appear'd;
The world, his friends agreed, had won the soul
From its best hopes, the man from their control.
To make him humble, and confine his views
Within their bounds, and books which they peruse,
A deputation from these friends select
Might reason with him to some good effect;
Arm'd with authority, and led by love,
They might those follies from his mind remove.
Deciding thus, and with this kind intent,
A chosen body with its speaker went.

"John," said the Teacher, "John, with great concern
"We see thy frailty, and thy fate discern—
"Satan with toils thy simple soul beset,
"And thou art careless slumbering in the net:
"Unmindful art thou of thy early vow;
"Who at the morning meeting sees thee now?
"Who at the evening? 'Where is brother John?'
"We ask;—are answer'd, 'To the tavern gone.'
"Thee on the sabbath seldom we behold;
"Thou canst not sing, thou 'rt nursing for a cold:
"This from the churchmen thou hast learn'd, for they
"Have colds and fevers on the sabbath-day;
"When in some snug warm room they sit, and pen
"Bills from their ledgers—world-entangled men!

"See with what pride thou hast enlarged thy shop;
"To view thy tempting stores the heedless stop.[7]
"By what strange names dost thou these baubles know,
"Which wantons wear, to make a sinful show?

"Hast thou in view these idle volumes placed
"To be the pander of a vicious taste?
"What 's here? a book of dances!—you advance
"In goodly knowledge—John, wilt learn to dance?
"How! '*Go*,' it says, and '*to the devil go!*
"'*And shake thyself!*' I tremble—but 't is so.
"Wretch as thou art, what answer canst thou make?
"Oh! without question, *thou* wilt go and shake.
"What's here? 'The School for Scandal'[8]—pretty schools!
"Well, and art thou proficient in the rules?
"Art thou a pupil? Is it thy design
"To make our names contemptible as thine?
"'*Old Nick, a novel!*'[9] oh! 't is mighty well—
"A fool has courage when he laughs at hell;
"'Frolic and Fun;' the 'Humours of Tim Grin;'
"Why, John, thou grow'st facetious in thy sin;
"And what?—'*The Archdeacon's Charge*'!—'t is mighty well—
"If Satan publish'd, thou wouldst doubtless sell;
"Jests, novels, dances, and this precious stuff
"To crown thy folly—we have seen enough;
"We find thee fitted for each evil work:
"Do print the Koran and become a Turk.

"John, thou art lost; success and worldly pride
"O'er all thy thoughts and purposes preside,
"Have bound thee fast, and drawn thee far aside:
"Yet turn; these sin-traps from thy shop expel,
"Repent and pray, and all may yet be well.

"And here thy wife, thy Dorothy behold,
"How fashion's wanton robes her form infold!
"Can grace, can goodness with such trappings dwell?
"John, thou hast made thy wife a Jezebel:
"See! on her bosom rests the sign of sin,
"The glaring proof of naughty thoughts within:
"What! 't is a cross: come hither—as a friend,
"Thus from thy neck the shameful badge I rend."

"Rend, if you dare," said Dighton; "you shall find
"A man of spirit, though to peace inclined;
"Call me ungrateful! have I not my pay
"At all times ready for the expected day?
"To share my plenteous board you deign to come,
"Myself your pupil, and my house your home:
"And shall the persons who my meat enjoy
"Talk of my faults, and treat me as a boy?

[6] ["My mind now began to expand; intellectual light and pleasure broke in, and dispelled the gloom of fanatical melancholy. It was in one of these cheerful moods that I one day took up the 'Life of John Buncle;' I also received great benefits from reading Coventry's 'Philemon to Hydaspes;' and began to enjoy many innocent pleasures and recreations in life, without the fear of being eternally damned for a laugh, a joke, or for spending a sociable evening with a few friends, going to the playhouse, &c. In a year or two after, I began with metaphysics, in the intricate though pleasing labyrinths of which I have occasionally since wandered. Having begun to think rationally, and reason freely on religious matters, I did not long remain with the Methodists," &c.—*Ibid.*, p. 155.]

[7] ["I had no sooner left the Society than I found that I had incurred the hatred of some, the envy of many, and the displeasure of all; so that for a long time I was constantly teased with their impertinent nonsense. I believe that never was poor devil so plagued. Some as they passed by my door, in their way to the tabernacle, would only make a stop and lift up their hands, turn up the whites of their eyes, shake their heads, groan, and pass on. Many would call in and take me aside, and, after making rueful faces, address me with, 'Oh, brother Lackington! I am very sorry to find that you, who began in the spirit, are now like to end in the flesh. Pray, brother, do remember Lot's wife.' Others called to know if I was as happy then as I was when I constantly sought the Lord with my brethren, in prayer-meeting, in class, and in band. One preacher assured me that I was lost, and that the devil would soon toss me about the flames of hell with a pitch-fork."—*Ibid.*, p. 162.]

[8] ['The School for Scandal,' a celebrated comedy by Sheridan.]

[9] ['Old Nick,' a satirical story, in three volumes, by Edward Du Bois, Esq.]

" Have you not told how Rome's insulting priests
" Led their meek laymen like a herd of beasts;
" And by their fleecing and their forgery made
" Their holy calling an accursed trade?
" Can you such acts and insolence condemn,
" Who to your utmost power resemble them?

" Concerns it you what books I set for sale?
" The tale perchance may be a virtuous tale;
" And for the rest, 't is neither wise nor just
" In you, who read not, to condemn on trust;
" Why should th' Archdeacon's Charge your spleen excite?
" He, or perchance th' Archbishop, may be right.

" That from your meetings I refrain is true:
" I meet with nothing pleasant—nothing new;
" But the same proofs, that not one text explain,
" And the same lights, where all things dark remain;
" I thought you saints on earth—but I have found
" Some sins among you, and the best unsound:
" You have your failings, like the crowds below
" And at your pleasure hot and cold can blow:
" When I at first your grave deportment saw,
" (I own my folly,) I was fill'd with awe;
" You spoke so warmly, and it seem'd so well,
" I should have thought it treason to rebel.
" Is it a wonder that a man like me
" Should such perfection in such teachers see—
" Nay, should conceive you sent from Heav'n to brave
" The host of sin, and sinful souls to save?
" But as our reason wakes, our prospects clear,
" And failings, flaws, and blemishes appear.

" When you were mounted in your rostrum high,
" We shrank beneath your tone, your frown, your eye:
" Then you beheld us abject, fallen, low,
" And felt your glory from our baseness grow;
" Touch'd by your words, I trembled like the rest,
" And my own vileness and your power confess'd:
" These, I exclaim'd, are men divine, and gazed
" On him who taught, delighted and amazed;
" Glad when he finish'd, if by chance he cast
" One look on such a sinner as he pass'd.

" But when I view'd you in a clearer light,
" And saw the frail and carnal appetite;
" When, at his humble pray'r, you deign'd to eat,
" Saints as you are, a civil sinner's meat;
" When, as you sat contented and at ease,
" Nibbling at leisure on the ducks and peas,[10]
" And, pleased some comforts in such place to find,
" You could descend to be a little kind;
" And gave us hope in heaven there might be room
" For a few souls beside your own to come;
" While this world's good engaged your carnal view,
" And like a sinner you enjoy'd it too;

" All this perceiving, can you think it strange
" That change in you should work an equal change?"

" Wretch that thou art," an elder cried, " and gone
" For everlasting!"[11]—" Go thyself," said John;
" Depart this instant, let me hear no more;
" My house my castle is, and that my door."

The hint they took, and from the door withdrew,
And John to meeting bade a long adieu;
Attach'd to business, he in time became
A wealthy man of no inferior name.
It seem'd, alas! in John's deluded sight,
That all was wrong because not all was right;
And when he found his teachers had their stains,
Resentment and not reason broke his chains:
Thus on his feelings he again relied,
And never look'd to reason for his guide:
Could he have wisely view'd the frailty shown,
And rightly weigh'd their wanderings and his own,
He might have known that men may be sincere,
Though gay and feasting on the savoury cheer;
That doctrines sound and sober they may teach,
Who love to eat with all the glee they preach;
Nay! who believe the duck, the grape, the pine,
Were not intended for the dog and swine:
But Dighton's hasty mind on every theme
Ran from the truth, and rested in th' extreme:
Flaws in his friends he found, and then withdrew
(Vain of his knowledge) from their virtues too.
Best of his books he loved the liberal kind,
That, if they improve not, still enlarge the mind;
And found himself, with such advisers, free
From a fix'd creed, as mind enlarged could be.
His humble wife at these opinions sigh'd,
But her he never heeded till she died:
He then assented to a last request,
And by the meeting-window let her rest;
And on her stone the sacred text was seen,
Which had her comfort in departing been.

Dighton with joy beheld his trade advance,
Yet seldom publish'd, loth to trust to chance:
Then wed a doctor's sister—poor indeed,
But skill'd in works her husband could not read;
Who, if he wish'd new ways of wealth to seek,
Could make her half-crown pamphlet in a week:
This he rejected, though without disdain,
And chose the old and certain way to gain.

Thus he proceeded: trade increased the while,
And fortune woo'd him with perpetual smile:
On early scenes he sometimes cast a thought,
When on his heart the mighty change was wrought;

[10] ["The preachers were continually reprobating the practice of masters and mistresses keeping servants at home on Sundays to dress dinners. But great was my surprise on discovering that these very men, who were continually preaching up fasting, abstinence, &c., to their congregation, and who wanted others to dine off cold dinners, or eat bread and cheese, would themselves not even sup without toasted fowls," &c.—LACKINGTON, p. 158.]

[11] ["They piously and charitably consigned me over to be tormented by the devil, and everywhere declared that I was turned a downright atheist."—*Ibid.*, p. 165.]

And all the ease and comfort Converts find
Was magnified in his reflecting mind:
Then on the teacher's priestly pride he dwelt,
That caused his freedom, but with this he felt
The danger of the free—for since that day
No guide had shown, no brethren join'd his way;
Forsaking one, he found no second creed,
But reading doubted, doubting what to read.

Still, though reproof had brought some present pain,
The gain he made was fair and honest gain;
He laid his wares indeed in public view,
But that all traders claim a right to do:
By means like these, he saw his wealth increase,
And felt his consequence, and dwelt in peace.

Our Hero's age was threescore years and five,
When he exclaim'd, "Why longer should I strive?
"Why more amass, who never must behold
"A young John Dighton to make glad the old?"
(The sons he had to early graves were gone,
And girls were burdens to the mind of John.)
"Had I a boy, he would our name sustain,
"That now to nothing must return again;
"But what are all my profits, credit, trade,
"And parish honours?—folly and parade."

Thus Dighton thought, and in his looks appear'd
Sadness, increased by much he saw and heard:
The Brethren often at the shop would stay,
And make their comments ere they walk'd away;
They mark'd the window, fill'd in every pane
With lawless prints of reputations slain;
Distorted forms of men with honours graced,
And our chief rulers in derision placed:
Amazed they stood, remembering well the days
When to be humble was their brother's praise;
When at the dwelling of their friend they stopp'd
To drop a word, or to receive it dropp'd;
Where they beheld the prints of men renown'd
And far-famed preachers pasted all around
(Such mouths! eyes! hair! so prim! so fierce! so sleek!
They look'd as speaking what is woe to speak):
On these the passing brethren loved to dwell—
How long they spake! how strongly! warmly! well!
What power had each to dive in mysteries deep,
To warm the cold, to make the harden'd weep;
To lure, to fright, to soothe, to awe the soul,
And list'ning flocks to lead and to control!

But now discoursing, as they linger'd near,
They tempted John (whom they accused) to hear
Their weighty charge—"And can the lost one feel,
"As in the time of duty, love, and zeal;
"When all were summon'd at the rising sun,
"And he was ready with his friends to run;
"When he, partaking with a chosen few,
"Felt the great change, sensation rich and new?
"No! all is lost; her favours Fortune shower'd
"Upon the man, and he is overpower'd;
"The world has won him with its tempting store
"Of needless wealth, and that has made him poor.
"Success undoes him; he has risen to fall,
"Has gain'd a fortune, and has lost his all;
"Gone back from Sion, he will find his age
"Loth to commence a second pilgrimage;
"He has retreated from the chosen track,
"And now must ever bear the burden on his back."

Hurt by such censure, John began to find
Fresh revolutions working in his mind;
He sought for comfort in his books, but read
Without a plan or method in his head;
What once amused, now rather made him sad;
What should inform, increased the doubts he had;
Shame would not let him seek at Church a guide,
And from his Meeting he was held by pride;
His wife derided fears she never felt,
And passing brethren daily censures dealt;
Hope for a son was now for ever past,
He was the first John Dighton and the last;
His stomach fail'd, his case the doctor knew,
But said, "he still might hold a year or two."
"No more!" he said; "but why should I complain?
"A life of doubt must be a life of pain:
"Could I be sure—but why should I despair?
"I 'm sure my conduct has been just and fair;
"In youth, indeed, I had a wicked will,
"But I repented, and have sorrow still:
"I had my comforts, and a growing trade
"Gave greater pleasure than a fortune made;
"And as I more possess'd, and reason'd more,
"I lost those comforts I enjoy'd before,
"When reverend guides I saw my table round,
"And in my guardian guest my safety found:
"Now sick and sad, no appetite, no ease,
"Nor pleasures have I, nor a wish to please;
"Nor views, nor hopes, nor plans, nor taste have I;
"Yet, sick of life, have no desire to die."

He said, and died: his trade, his name is gone,
And all that once gave consequence to John.

Unhappy Dighton! had he found a friend
When conscience told him it was time to mend—
A friend discreet, considerate, kind, sincere,
Who would have shown the grounds of hope and fear,
And proved that spirits, whether high or low,
No certain tokens of man's safety show—
Had Reason ruled him in her proper place,
And Virtue led him while he lean'd on grace—
Had he while zealous been discreet and pure,
His knowledge humble, and his hope secure;—
These guides had placed him on the solid rock,
Where Faith had rested, nor received a shock;
But his, alas! was placed upon the sand,
Where long it stood not, and where none can stand.[12]

[12] ['The Convert' teaches a useful lesson. John Dighton was bred a blackguard (and we have here a most lively and complete description of the items that go to the composition of that miscellaneous character), but, being sore reduced by a long fever, falls into the hands of the Methodists, and becomes an exemplary convert. He is then set up by the congregation in a small stationer's shop; and, as he begins to thrive in business, adds worldly literature to the evangelical

TALE XX.

THE BROTHERS.[1]

A brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practice may ride easy. *Lear.*

He lets me feed with hinds,
Bars me the place of brother. *As You Like It.*

'Twas I, but 't is not I: I do not shame
To tell you what I was, being what I am.
As You Like It.

THAN old *George Fletcher*, on the British coast
Dwelt not a seaman who had more to boast:
Kind, simple, and sincere—he seldom spoke,
But sometimes sang and chorus'd—"Hearts of oak!"
In dangers steady, with his lot content,
His days in labour and in love were spent.

He left a Son so like him, that the old
With joy exclaim'd, "'T is Fletcher we behold;"
But to his Brother, when the kinsmen came
And view'd his form, they grudged the father's name.

George was a bold, intrepid, careless lad,
With just the failings that his father had;
Isaac was weak, attentive, slow, exact,
With just the virtues that his father lack'd.

George lived at sea: upon the land a guest—
He sought for recreation, not for rest;
While, far unlike, his brother's feebler form
Shrank from the cold, and shudder'd at the storm;
Still with the Seaman's to connect his trade,
The boy was bound where blocks and ropes were made.

George, strong and sturdy, had a tender mind,
And was to Isaac pitiful and kind;
A very father, till his art was gain'd,
And then a friend unwearied he remain'd;
He saw his brother was of spirit low,
His temper peevish, and his motions slow;
Not fit to bustle in a world, or make
Friends to his fortune for his merit's sake;
But the kind sailor could not boast the art
Of looking deeply in the human heart;
Else had he seen that this weak brother knew
What men to court—what objects to pursue;
That he to distant gain the way discern'd,
And none so crooked but his genius learn'd.

Isaac was poor, and this the brother felt;
He hired a house, and there the Landman dwelt,
Wrought at his trade, and had an easy home,
For there would George with cash and comforts come;
And when they parted, Isaac look'd around
Where other friends and helpers might be found.

He wish'd for some port-place, and one might fall,
He wisely thought, if he should try for all;
He had a vote—and were it well applied,
Might have its worth—and he had views beside;
Old Burgess Steel was able to promote
An humble man who served him with a vote;
For Isaac felt not what some tempers feel,
But bow'd and bent the neck to Burgess Steel;
And great attention to a Lady gave,
His ancient friend, a maiden spare and grave;
One whom the visage long and look demure
Of Isaac pleased—he seem'd sedate and pure;
And his soft heart conceived a gentle flame
For her who waited on this virtuous dame:
Not an outrageous love, a scorching fire,
But friendly liking and chastised desire;
And thus he waited, patient in delay,
In present favour and in fortune's way.

George then was coasting—war was yet delay'd,
And what he gain'd was to his brother paid;
Nor ask'd the Seaman what he saved or spent,
But took his grog, wrought hard, and was content;
Till war awaked the land, and George began
To think what part became a useful man:
"Press'd, I must go; why, then, 't is better far
"At once to enter like a British tar,
"Than a brave captain and the foe to shun,
"As if I fear'd the music of a gun."
"Go not!" said Isaac—"you shall wear disguise."
"What!" said the Seaman, "clothe myself with lies!"
"Oh! but there 's danger."—"Danger in the fleet?
"You cannot mean, good brother, of defeat;
"And other dangers I at land must share—
"So now adieu! and trust a brother's care."

tracts which composed his original stock in trade. This scandalizes the brethren: and John, having no principles or knowledge, falls out with the sect, and can never settle in the creed of any other; and so lives perplexed and discontented, and dies in agitation and terror.—JEFFREY.

Such was not, however, the ultimate fate of Lackington. In 1798 he retired from his shop in Finsbury Square, to which he had given the title of "Temple of the Muses," and went to spend the evening of life at Thornbury, in Gloucestershire. In 1803 he published his 'Confessions,' in which he gives a detail of his *reconversion* to Methodism. Before his death, which took place in 1815, he expended 3000*l.* upon the erection of a Wesleyan chapel, to which he added a salary of 150*l.* per annum for the preacher. In the front of the building appears this inscription:—"This Temple is erected as a monument of God's mercy, in convincing an Infidel of the important Truths of Christianity."]

[1] [Mr. Crabbe, ever a tender and beneficent brother, sent his sister, the late Mrs. Sparkes, to a millinery establishment at Ipswich, with the first money he received at Belvoir; and, gratefully attached as she was in return, there is reason to believe that this tale was composed during a little transitory coldness, which—how originating it is now forgotten—had interrupted their affection.]

Isaac awhile demurr'd—but, in his heart,
So might he share, he was disposed to part:
The better mind will sometimes feel the pain
Of benefactions—favour is a chain;
But they the feeling scorn, and what they wish,
disdain;—
While beings form'd in coarser mould will hate
The helping hand they ought to venerate:
No wonder George should in this cause prevail,
With one contending who was glad to fail:
"Isaac, farewell! do wipe that doleful eye;
"Crying we came, and groaning we may die;
"Let us do something 'twixt the groan and cry:
"And hear me, brother, whether pay or prize,
"One half to thee I give and I devise;
"For thou hast oft occasion for the aid
"Of learn'd physicians, and they will be paid;
"Their wives and children men support at sea,
"And thou, my lad, art wife and child to me:
"Farewell! I go where hope and honour call,
"Nor does it follow that who fights must fall."

Isaac here made a poor attempt to speak,
And a huge tear moved slowly down his cheek;
Like Pluto's iron drop, hard sign of grace,
It slowly roll'd upon the rueful face,
Forced by the striving will alone its way to trace.

Years fled—war lasted—George at sea remain'd,
While the slow Landman still his profits gain'd:
An humble place was vacant—he besought
His patron's interest, and the office caught;
For still the Virgin was his faithful friend,
And one so sober could with truth commend,
Who of his own defects most humbly thought,
And their advice with zeal and reverence sought:
Whom thus the Mistress praised, the Maid approved,
And her he wedded whom he wisely loved.

No more he needs assistance—but, alas!
He fears the money will for liquor pass;
Or that the Seaman might to flatterers lend,
Or give support to some pretended friend:
Still he must write—he wrote,—and he confess'd
That, till absolved, he should be sore distress'd;
But one so friendly would, he thought, forgive
The hasty deed—Heav'n knew how he should live;
"But you," he added, "as a man of sense,
"Have well consider'd danger and expense:
"I ran, alas! into the fatal snare,
"And now for trouble must my mind prepare;
"And how, with children, I shall pick my way
"Through a hard world, is more than I can say:
"Then change not, Brother, your more happy state,
"Or on the hazard long deliberate."

George answer'd gravely, "It is right and fit,
"In all our crosses, humbly to submit:
"Your apprehensions are unwise, unjust;
"Forbear repining, and expel distrust."
He added, "Marriage was the joy of life,"
And gave his service to his brother's wife;
Then vow'd to bear in all expense a part,
And thus concluded, "Have a cheerful heart."

Had the glad Isaac been his brother's guide,
In the same terms the Seaman had replied;
At such reproofs the crafty Landman smiled,
And softly said, "This creature is a child."

Twice had the gallant ship a capture made—
And when in port the happy crew were paid,
Home went the Sailor, with his pockets stored,
Ease to enjoy, and pleasure to afford;
His time was short, joy shone in every face,
Isaac half fainted in the fond embrace:
The wife resolved her honour'd guest to please,
The children clung upon their uncle's knees;
The grog went round, the neighbours drank his health,
And George exclaim'd, "Ah! what to this is wealth?
"Better," said he, "to bear a loving heart,
"Than roll in riches——but we now must part!"

All yet is still—but hark! the winds o'ersweep
The rising waves, and howl upon the deep;
Ships late becalm'd on mountain-billows ride—
So life is threaten'd and so man is tried.

Ill were the tidings that arrived from sea,
The worthy George must now a cripple be;
His leg was lopp'd; and though his heart was sound,
Though his brave captain was with glory crown'd,
Yet much it vex'd him to repose on shore,
An idle log, and be of use no more:
True, he was sure that Isaac would receive
All of his Brother that the foe might leave;
To whom the Seaman his design had sent,
Ere from the port the wounded hero went:
His wealth and expectations told, he "knew
"Wherein they fail'd, what Isaac's love would do;
"That he the grog and cabin would supply,
"Where George at anchor during life would lie."

The Landman read—and, reading, grew distress'd:—
"Could he resolve t' admit so poor a guest?
"Better at Greenwich might the Sailor stay,
"Unless his purse could for his comforts pay."
So Isaac judged, and to his wife appeal'd,
But yet acknowledged it was best to yield:
"Perhaps his pension, with what sums remain
"Due or unsquander'd, may the man maintain;
"Refuse we must not."—With a heavy sigh
The lady heard, and made her kind reply:—
"Nor would I wish it, Isaac, were we sure
"How long this crazy building will endure;
"Like an old house, that every day appears
"About to fall, he may be propp'd for years;
"For a few months, indeed, we might comply,
"But these old batter'd fellows never die."

The hand of Isaac, George on entering took,
With love and resignation in his look;
Declared his comfort in the fortune past,
And joy to find his anchor safely cast;
"Call then my nephews, let the grog be brought,
"And I will tell them how the ship was fought."

Alas! our simple Seaman should have known,
That all the care, the kindness, he had shown,
Were from his Brother's heart, if not his memory, flown:
All swept away, to be perceived no more,
Like idle structures on the sandy shore,
The chance amusement of the playful boy,
That the rude billows in their rage destroy.

Poor George confess'd, though loth the truth to find,
Slight was his knowledge of a Brother's mind:
The vulgar pipe was to the wife offence,
The frequent grog to Isaac an expense;
Would friends like hers, she question'd, "choose to come,
"Where clouds of poison'd fume defiled a room?
"This could their Lady-friend, and Burgess Steel,
"(Teased with his worship's asthma,) bear to feel?
"Could they associate or converse with him—
"A loud rough sailor with a timber limb?"

Cold as he grew, still Isaac strove to show,
By well-feign'd care, that cold he could not grow;
And when he saw his brother look distress'd,
He strove some petty comforts to suggest;
On his wife solely their neglect to lay,
And then t' excuse it, as a woman's way;
He too was chidden when her rules he broke,
And then she sicken'd at the scent of smoke.

George, though in doubt, was still consoled to find
His Brother wishing to be reckon'd kind:
That Isaac seem'd concern'd by his distress,
Gave to his injured feelings some redress;
But none he found disposed to lend an ear
To stories, all were once intent to hear:
Except his nephew, seated on his knee,
He found no creature cared about the sea;
But George indeed—for George they call'd the boy,
When his good uncle was their boast and joy—
Would listen long, and would contend with sleep,
To hear the woes and wonders of the deep;
Till the fond mother cried—"That man will teach
"The foolish boy his loud and boisterous speech."
So judged the father—and the boy was taught
To shun the uncle, whom his love had sought.

The mask of kindness now but seldom worn,
George felt each evil harder to be borne;
And cried (vexation growing day by day),
"Ah! brother Isaac!—What! I'm in the way!"
"No! on my credit, look ye, No! but I
"Am fond of peace, and my repose would buy
"On any terms—in short, we must comply:
"My spouse had money—she must have her will—
"Ah! Brother, marriage is a bitter pill."

George tried the lady—"Sister, I offend."
"Me?" she replied—"Oh no! you may depend
"On my regard—but watch your Brother's way,
"Whom I, like you, must study and obey."

"Ah!" thought the Seaman, "what a head was mine,
"That easy berth at Greenwich to resign!
"I'll to the parish"——but a little pride,
And some affection, put the thought aside.

Now gross neglect and open scorn he bore
In silent sorrow—but he felt the more:
The odious pipe he to the kitchen took,
Or strove to profit by some pious book.

When the mind stoops to this degraded state,
New griefs will darken the dependant's fate;
"Brother!" said Isaac, "you will sure excuse
"The little freedom I'm compell'd to use:
"My wife's relations—(curse the haughty crew!)—
"Affect such niceness, and such dread of you:
"You speak so loud—and they have natures soft—
"Brother——I wish——do go upon the loft!"

Poor George obey'd, and to the garret fled,
Where not a being saw the tears he shed:
But more was yet required, for guests were come,
Who could not dine if he disgraced the room.
It shock'd his spirit to be esteem'd unfit
With an own brother and his wife to sit;
He grew rebellious—at the vestry spoke
For weekly aid——they heard it as a joke:
"So kind a brother, and so wealthy——you
"Apply to us?——No! this will never do:
"Good neighbour Fletcher," said the Overseer,
"We are engaged—you can have nothing here!"

George mutter'd something in despairing tone,
Then sought his loft, to think and grieve alone;
Neglected, slighted, restless on his bed,
With heart half broken, and with scraps ill fed;
Yet was he pleased that hours for play design'd
Were given to ease his ever-troubled mind;
The child still listen'd with increasing joy,
And he was sooth'd by the attentive boy.

At length he sicken'd, and this duteous child
Watch'd o'er his sickness, and his pains beguiled;
The mother bade him from the loft refrain,
But, though with caution, yet he went again;
And now his tales the Sailor feebly told,
His heart was heavy, and his limbs were cold:
The tender boy came, often to entreat
His good kind friend would of his presents eat;
Purloin'd or purchased, for he saw, with shame,
The food untouch'd that to his uncle came;
Who, sick in body and in mind, received
The boy's indulgence, gratified and grieved.

"Uncle will die!" said George:—the piteous wife
Exclaim'd, "she saw no value in his life;
"But, sick or well, to my commands attend,
"And go no more to your complaining friend."
The boy was vex'd, he felt his heart reprove
The stern decree.—What! punish'd for his love!
No! he would go, but softly, to the room,
Stealing in silence—for he knew his doom.

Once in a week the father came to say,
"George, are you ill?"—and hurried him away;
Yet to his wife would on their duties dwell,
And often cry, "Do use my brother well:"
And something kind, no question, Isaac meant,
Who took vast credit for the vague intent.

But, truly kind, the gentle boy essay'd
To cheer his uncle, firm, although afraid;
But now the father caught him at the door,
And, swearing—yes, the man in office swore,
And cried, "Away! How! Brother, I'm surprised
"That one so old can be so ill advised:
"Let him not dare to visit you again,
"Your cursed stories will disturb his brain;
"Is it not vile to court a foolish boy,
"Your own absurd narrations to enjoy?
"What! sullen!—ha, George Fletcher! you shall see,
"Proud as you are, your bread depends on me!"

He spoke, and, frowning, to his dinner went,
Then cool'd and felt some qualms of discontent:
And thought on times when he compell'd his son
To hear these stories, nay, to beg for one;
But the wife's wrath o'ercame the brother's pain,
And shame was felt, and conscience rose, in vain.

George yet stole up; he saw his Uncle lie
Sick on the bed, and heard his heavy sigh;
So he resolved, before he went to rest,
To comfort one so dear and so distress'd;
Then watch'd his time, but, with a child-like art,
Betray'd a something treasured at his heart:
Th' observant wife remark'd, "The boy is grown
"So like your brother, that he seems his own:
"So close and sullen! and I still suspect
"They often meet:—do watch them and detect."

George now remark'd that all was still as night,
And hasten'd up with terror and delight;
"Uncle!" he cried, and softly tapp'd the door,
"Do let me in"—but he could add no more;
The careful father caught him in the fact,
And cried,—"You serpent! is it thus you act?
"Back to your mother!"—and, with hasty blow,
He sent th' indignant boy to grieve below;
Then at the door an angry speech began—
"Is this your conduct?—Is it thus you plan?
"Seduce my child, and make my house a scene
"Of vile dispute——What is it that you mean?
"George, are you dumb? do learn to know your friends,
"And think awhile on whom your bread depends.
"What! not a word? be thankful I am cool—
"But, sir, beware, nor longer play the fool.
"Come! brother, come! what is it that you seek
"By this rebellion?—Speak, you villain, speak!
"Weeping! I warrant—sorrow makes you dumb:
"I'll ope your mouth, impostor! if I come:
"Let me approach—I'll shake you from the bed,
"You stubborn dog——Oh God! my Brother's dead!"

Timid was Isaac, and in all the past
He felt a purpose to be kind at last;
Nor did he mean his brother to depart,
Till he had shown this kindness of his heart;
But day by day he put the cause aside,
Induced by av'rice, peevishness, or pride.

But now awaken'd, from this fatal time
His conscience Isaac felt, and found his crime:
He raised to George a monumental stone,
And there retired to sigh and think alone;
An ague seized him, he grew pale, and shook—
"So," said his son, "would my poor Uncle look."
"And so, my child, shall I like him expire."
"No! you have physic and a cheerful fire."
"Unhappy sinner! yes, I'm well supplied
"With every comfort my cold heart denied.'

He view'd his Brother now, but not as one
Who vex'd his wife by fondness for her son;
Not as with wooden limb, and seaman's tale,
The odious pipe, vile grog, or humbler ale:
He now the worth and grief alone can view
Of one so mild, so generous, and so true;
"The frank, kind Brother, with such open heart,—
"And I to break it——'t was a demon's part!"

So Isaac now, as led by conscience, feels,
Nor his unkindness palliates or conceals;
"This is your folly," said his heartless wife:
"Alas! my folly cost my Brother's life;
"It suffer'd him to languish and decay—
"My gentle brother, whom I could not pay,
"And therefore left to pine, and fret his life away!"

He takes his Son, and bids the boy unfold
All the good Uncle of his feelings told,
All he lamented—and the ready tear
Falls as he listens, soothed, and grieved to hear.

"Did he not curse me, child?"—"He never cursed,
"But could not breathe, and said his heart would burst."
"And so will mine:"—"Then, father, you must pray:
"My uncle said it took his pains away."

Repeating thus his sorrows, Isaac shows
That he, repenting, feels the debt he owes,
And from this source alone his every comfort flows.
He takes no joy in office, honours, gain;
They make him humble, nay, they give him pain:
"These from my heart," he cries, "all feeling drove;
"They made me cold to nature, dead to love."
He takes no joy in home, but sighing, sees
A son in sorrow, and a wife at ease;
He takes no joy in office—see him now,
And Burgess Steel has but a passing bow;
Of one sad train of gloomy thoughts possess'd,
He takes no joy in friends, in food, in rest—
Dark are the evil days, and void of peace the best.
And thus he lives, if living be to sigh,
And from all comforts of the world to fly,
Without a hope in life—without a wish to die.[2]

2 [The characters in this tale, though humble, are admirably drawn, and the baser of them, we fear, the most strikingly natural. An open-hearted generous sailor had a poor, sneaking, cunning, selfish brother, to whom he remitted all his prize-money, and gave all the arrears of his pay—receiving, in return, vehement professions of gratitude and false protestations of regard. At last, the sailor is disabled in action, and discharged just as his heartless brother has secured a

TALE XXI.

THE LEARNED BOY.

Like one well studied in a sad ostent,
To please his grandam. *Merchant of Venice.*

And then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping, like snail,
Unwillingly to school. *As You Like It.*

He is a better scholar than I thought he was; he has a good sprag memory.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

One that feeds
On objects, arts, and imitations,
Which out of use, and staled by other men,
Begin his fashion. *Julius Cæsar.*

Oh! torture me no more—I will confess.—2 *Henry VI.*

AN honest man was *Farmer Jones*, and true;
He did by all as all by him should do;
Grave, cautious, careful, fond of gain was he,
Yet famed for rustic hospitality:
Left with his children in a widow'd state,
The quiet man submitted to his fate;
Though prudent matrons waited for his call,
With cool forbearance he avoided all;
Though each profess'd a pure maternal joy,
By kind attention to his feeble boy;
And though a friendly Widow knew no rest,
Whilst neighbour Jones was lonely and distress'd;
Nay, though the maidens spoke in tender tone
Their hearts' concern to see him left alone,
Jones still persisted in that cheerless life,
As if 't were sin to take a second wife.

Oh! 't is a precious thing, when wives are dead,
To find such numbers who will serve instead;
And in whatever state a man be thrown,
'T is that precisely they would wish their own;
Left the departed infants—then their joy
Is to sustain each lovely girl and boy:
Whatever calling his, whatever trade,
To that their chief attention has been paid;
His happy taste in all things they approve,
His friends they honour, and his food they love;
His wish for order, prudence in affairs,
An equal temper (thank their stars!), are theirs;
In fact, it seem'd to be a thing decreed,
And fix'd as fate, that marriage must succeed:

Yet some, like Jones, with stubborn hearts and hard,
Can hear such claims and show them no regard.

Soon as our Farmer, like a general, found
By what strong foes he was encompass'd round,
Engage he dared not, and he could not fly,
But saw his hope in gentle parley lie;
With looks of kindness then, and trembling heart,
He met the foe, and art opposed to art.

Now spoke that foe insidious—gentle tones,
And gentle looks, assumed for Farmer Jones:
"Three girls," the Widow cried, "a lively three
"To govern well—indeed it cannot be."
"Yes," he replied, "it calls for pains and care:
"But I must bear it."—"Sir, you cannot bear;
"Your son is weak, and asks a mother's eye:"
"That, my kind friend, a father's may supply."
"Such growing griefs your very soul will tease:"
"To grieve another would not give me ease—
"I have a mother"—"She, poor ancient soul!
"Can she the spirits of the young control?
"Can she thy peace promote, partake thy care,
"Procure thy comforts, and thy sorrows share?
"Age is itself impatient, uncontroll'd:"
"But wives like mothers must at length be old."
"Thou hast shrewd servants—they are evils sore:"
"Yet a shrewd mistress might afflict me more."
"Wilt thou not be a weary, wailing man?"
"Alas! and I must bear it as I can."

Resisted thus, the Widow soon withdrew,
That in his pride the Hero might pursue;
And off his wonted guard, in some retreat,
Find from a foe prepared entire defeat:
But he was prudent; for he knew in flight
These Parthian warriors turn again and fight:[1]
He but at freedom, not at glory aim'd,
And only safety by his caution claim'd.

Thus, when a great and powerful state decrees
Upon a small one, in its love, to seize—
It vows in kindness, to protect, defend,
And be the fond ally, the faithful friend;
It therefore wills that humbler state to place
Its hopes of safety in a fond embrace;
Then must that humbler state its wisdom prove,
By kind rejection of such pressing love;
Must dread such dangerous friendship to commence,
And stand collected in its own defence:
Our Farmer thus the proffer'd kindness fled,
And shunn'd the love that into bondage led.

The Widow failing, fresh besiegers came,
To share the fate of this retiring dame:

small office by sycophancy, and made a prudent marriage with a congenial temper. He seeks the shelter of his brother's house as freely as he would have given it; and does not at first perceive the coldness of his reception. But mortifications grow upon him day by day. His grog is expensive, and his pipe makes the wife sick; then his voice is so loud, and his manners so rough, that her friends cannot visit her if he appears at table; so he is banished by degrees to a garret, where he falls sick, and has no consolation but in the kindness of one of his nephews, a little boy, who administers to his comfort, and listens to his stories with a delighted attention. This too, however, is interdicted by his hard-hearted parents; and the boy is obliged to steal privately to his disconsolate uncle. One day his father catches him at his door; and, after beating him back, proceeds to deliver a severe rebuke to his brother for encouraging the child in disobedience, when he finds the unconscious culprit released by death from his despicable insults and reproaches. The great art of the story consists in the plausible excuses with which the ungrateful brother always contrives to cover his wickedness. After the catastrophe, he endures deserved remorse and anguish.—JEFFREY.]

[1] The Parthians were so skilled in the art of the bow, that they could shoot with effect flying.

And each foresaw a thousand ills attend
The man that fled from so discreet a friend;
And pray'd, kind soul! that no event might make
The harden'd heart of Farmer Jones to ache.

But he still govern'd with resistless hand,
And where he could not guide he would command:
With steady view in course direct he steer'd,
And his fair daughters loved him, though they fear'd;
Each had her school, and as his wealth was known,
Each had in time a household of her own.

The Boy indeed was at the Grandam's side
Humour'd and train'd, her trouble and her pride:
Companions dear, with speech and spirits mild,
The childish widow and the vapourish child;
This nature prompts; minds uninform'd and weak
In such alliance ease and comfort seek:
Push'd by the levity of youth aside,
The cares of man, his humour, or his pride,
They feel, in their defenceless state, allied:
The child is pleased to meet regard from age,
The old are pleased e'en children to engage;
And all their wisdom, scorn'd by proud mankind,
They love to pour into the ductile mind,
By its own weakness into error led,
And by fond age with prejudices fed.

The Father, thankful for the good he had,
Yet saw with pain a whining, timid Lad;
Whom he instructing led through cultured fields,
To show what Man performs, what Nature yields:
But Stephen, listless, wander'd from the view,
From beasts he fled, for butterflies he flew,
And idly gazed about in search of something new.
The lambs indeed he loved, and wish'd to play
With things so mild, so harmless, and so gay;
Best pleased the weakest of the flock to see,
With whom he felt a sickly sympathy.

Meantime the Dame was anxious, day and night,
To guide the notions of her babe aright,
And on the favourite mind to throw her glimmering light;
Her Bible-stories she impress'd betimes,
And fill'd his head with hymns and holy rhymes;
On powers unseen, the good and ill, she dwelt,
And the poor Boy mysterious terrors felt;
From frightful dreams he waking sobb'd in dread,
Till the good lady came to guard his bed.

The Father wish'd such errors to correct,
But let them pass in duty and respect:
But more it grieved his worthy mind to see
That Stephen never would a farmer be;
In vain he tried the shiftless Lad to guide,
And yet 't was time that something should be tried:
He at the village-school perchance might gain
All that such mind could gather and retain;
Yet the good Dame affirm'd her favourite child
Was apt and studious, though sedate and mild;
"That he on many a learned point could speak,
"And that his body, not his mind, was weak."

The Father doubted—but to school was sent
The timid Stephen, weeping as he went:
There the rude lads compell'd the child to fight,
And sent him bleeding to his home at night;
At this the Grandam more indulgent grew,
And bade her Darling "shun the beastly crew;
"Whom Satan ruled, and who were sure to lie
"Howling in torments, when they came to die."
This was such comfort, that in high disdain
He told their fate, and felt their blows again:
Yet if the Boy had not a hero's heart,
Within the school he play'd a better part;
He wrote a clean fine hand, and at his slate
With more success than many a hero sate;
He thought not much indeed—but what depends
On pains and care was at his fingers' ends.

This had his Father's praise, who now espied
A spark of merit, with a blaze of pride;
And though a farmer he would never make,
He might a pen with some advantage take;
And as a clerk that instrument employ,
So well adapted to a timid boy.

A London Cousin soon a place obtain'd,
Easy but humble—little could be gain'd:
The time arrived when youth and age must part,
Tears in each eye, and sorrow in each heart;
The careful Father bade his Son attend
To all his duties and obey his Friend;
To keep his church and there behave aright,
As one existing in his Maker's sight,
Till acts to habits led, and duty to delight:
"Then try, my boy, as quickly as you can,
"T' assume the looks and spirit of a man;
"I say, be honest, faithful, civil, true,
"And this you may, and yet have courage too:
"Heroic men, their country's boast and pride,
"Have fear'd their God, and nothing fear'd beside;
"While others daring, yet imbecile, fly
"The power of man, and that of God defy:
"Be manly, then, though mild, for, sure as fate,
"Thou art, my Stephen, too effeminate;
"Here, take my purse, and make a worthy use
"('T is fairly stock'd) of what it will produce:
"And now my blessing, not as any charm
"Or conjuration; but 't will do no harm."

Stephen, whose thoughts were wandering up and down,
Now charm'd with promised sights in London-town,
Now loth to leave his Grandam—lost the force,
The drift and tenor of this grave discourse;
But, in a general way, he understood
'T was good advice, and meant, "My son, be good;"
And Stephen knew that all such precepts mean
That lads should read their Bible, and be clean.

The good old Lady, though in some distress,
Begg'd her dear Stephen would his grief suppress:
"Nay, dry those eyes, my child—and, first of all,
"Hold fast thy faith, whatever may befall:
"Hear the best preacher, and preserve the text
"For meditation till you hear the next;
"Within your Bible night and morning look—
"There is your duty, read no other book;
"Be not in crowds, in broils, in riots seen,
"And keep your conscience and your linen clean:

"Be you a Joseph, and the time may be
"When kings and rulers will be ruled by thee."

"Nay," said the Father——"Hush, my son!" replied
The Dame——"the Scriptures must not be denied."

The Lad, still weeping, heard the wheels approach,
And took his place within the evening coach,
With heart quite rent asunder: on one side
Was love, and grief, and fear, for scenes untried;
Wild-beasts and wax-work fill'd the happier part
Of Stephen's varying and divided heart:
This he betray'd by sighs and questions strange,
Of famous shows, the Tower, and the Exchange.

Soon at his desk was placed the curious Boy,
Demure and silent at his new employ;
Yet as he could he much attention paid
To all around him, cautious and afraid;
On older Clerks his eager eyes were fix'd,
But Stephen never in their council mix'd;
Much their contempt he fear'd, for if like them,
He felt assured he should himself contemn;
"Oh! they were all so eloquent, so free,
"No! he was nothing—nothing could he be:
"They dress so smartly, and so boldly look,
"And talk as if they read it from a book;
"But I," said Stephen, "will forbear to speak,
"And they will think me prudent and not weak.
"They talk, the instant they have dropp'd the pen,
"Of singing-women and of acting-men;
"Of plays and places where at night they walk
"Beneath the lamps, and with the ladies talk;
"While other ladies for their pleasure sing,—
"Oh! 'tis a glorious and a happy thing:
"They would despise me, did they understand
"I dare not look upon a scene so grand;
"Or see the plays when critics rise and roar,
"And hiss and groan, and cry—Encore! encore!
"There's one among them looks a little kind;
"If more encouraged, I would ope my mind."

Alas! poor Stephen, happier had he kept
His purpose secret, while his envy slept;
Virtue perhaps had conquer'd, or his shame
At least preserved him simple as he came.
A year elapsed before this Clerk began
To treat the rustic something like a man;
He then in trifling points the youth advised,
Talk'd of his coat, and had it modernised;
Or with the lad a Sunday-walk would take,
And kindly strive his passions to awake;
Meanwhile explaining all they heard and saw,
Till Stephen stood in wonderment and awe;
To a neat garden near the town they stray'd,
Where the Lad felt delighted and afraid;
There all he saw was smart, and fine, and fair—
He could but marvel how he ventured there:
Soon he observed, with terror and alarm,
His friend enlocked within a Lady's arm,
And freely talking—"But it is," said he,
"A near relation, and that makes him free;"
And much amazed was Stephen when he knew
This was the first and only interview:
Nay, had that lovely arm by him been seized,
The lovely owner had been highly pleased.
"Alas!" he sigh'd, "I never can contrive
"At such bold, blessed freedoms to arrive;
"Never shall I such happy courage boast,
"I dare as soon encounter with a ghost."

Now to a play the friendly couple went,
But the Boy murmur'd at the money spent;
"He loved," he said, "to buy, but not to spend—
"They only talk awhile, and there's an end."

"Come, you shall purchase books," the Friend replied;
"You are bewilder'd, and you want a guide;
"To me refer the choice, and you shall find
"The light break in upon your stagnant mind!"

The cooler Clerks exclaim'd, "In vain your art
"To improve a cub without a head or heart;
"Rustics, though coarse, and savages, though wild,
"Our cares may render liberal and mild;
"But what, my friend, can flow from all these pains?
"There is no dealing with a lack of brains."

"True I am hopeless to behold him man,
"But let me make the booby what I can:
"Though the rude stone no polish will display,
"Yet you may strip the rugged coat away."

Stephen beheld his books—"I love to know
"How money goes—now here is that to show:
"And now," he cried, "I shall be pleased to get
"Beyond the Bible—there I puzzle yet."

He spoke abash'd.—"Nay, nay!" the friend replied,
"You need not lay the good old book aside;
"Antique and curious, I myself indeed
"Read it at times, but as a man should read;
"A fine old work it is, and I protest
"I hate to hear it treated as a jest;
"The book has wisdom in it, if you look
"Wisely upon it, as another book:
"For superstition (as our priests of sin
"Are pleased to tell us) makes us blind within;
"Of this hereafter—we will now select
"Some works to please you, others to direct:
"Tales and romances shall your fancy feed,
"And reasoners form your morals and your creed."

The books were view'd, the price was fairly paid,
And Stephen read undaunted, undismay'd:
But not till first he papered all the row,
And placed in order to enjoy the show;
Next letter'd all the backs with care and speed,
Set them in ranks, and then began to read.

The love of Order—I the thing receive
From reverend men, and I in part believe—

Shows a clear mind and clean, and whoso needs
This love, but seldom in the world succeeds;
And yet with this some other love must be,
Ere I can fully to the fact agree;
Valour and study may by order gain,
By order sovereigns hold more steady reign;
Through all the tribes of nature order runs,
And rules around in systems and in suns:
Still has the love of order found a place,
With all that's low, degrading, mean, and base,
With all that merits scorn, and all that meets disgrace—
In the cold miser, of all change afraid;
In pompous men in public seats obey'd;
In humble placemen, heralds, solemn drones,
Fanciers of flowers, and lads like Stephen Jones:
Order to these is armour and defence,
And love of method serves in lack of sense.[2]

For rustic youth could I a list produce
Of Stephen's books, how great might be the use!
But evil fate was theirs—survey'd, enjoy'd
Some happy months, and then by force destroy'd:
So will'd the Fates—but these with patience read
Had vast effect on Stephen's heart and head.

This soon appear'd: within a single week
He oped his lips, and made attempt to speak;
He fail'd indeed—but still his Friend confess'd
The best have fail'd, and he had done his best:
The first of swimmers, when at first he swims,
Has little use or freedom in his limbs;
Nay, when at length he strikes with manly force,
The cramp may seize him, and impede his course.

Encouraged thus, our Clerk again essay'd
The daring act, though daunted and afraid;
Succeeding now, though partial his success,
And pertness mark'd his manner and address,
Yet such improvement issued from his books,
That all discern'd it in his speech and looks:
He ventured then on every theme to speak,
And felt no feverish tingling in his cheek;
His friend, approving, hail'd the happy change,
The Clerks exclaim'd—"'T is famous, and 't is strange."

Two years had pass'd; the Youth attended still
(Though thus accomplish'd) with a ready quill;
He sat th' allotted hours, though hard the case,
While timid prudence ruled in virtue's place;
By promise bound, the Son his letters penn'd
To his good parent at the quarter's end.
At first he sent those lines, the state to tell
Of his own health, and hoped his friends were well;
He kept their virtuous precepts in his mind,
And needed nothing—then his name was sign'd:

But now he wrote of Sunday-walks and views,
Of actors' names, choice novels, and strange news;
How coats were cut, and of his urgent need
For fresh supply, which he desired with speed.
The Father doubted, when these letters came,
To what they tended, yet was loth to blame
"Stephen was once *my duteous son*, and now
"*My most obedient*—this can I allow?
"Can I with pleasure or with patience see
"A boy at once so heartless and so free?"

But soon the kinsman heavy tidings told,
That love and prudence could no more withhold:
"Stephen, though steady at his desk, was grown
"A rake and coxcomb—*this* he grieved to own;
"His cousin left his church, and spent the day
"Lounging about in quite a heathen way;
"Sometimes he swore, but had indeed the grace
"To show the shame imprinted on his face:
"I search'd his room, and in his absence read
"Books that I knew would turn a stronger head;
"The works of atheists half the number made,
"The rest were lives of harlots leaving trade;
"Which neither man nor boy would deign to read,
"If from the scandal and pollution freed:
"I sometimes threaten'd, and would fairly state
"My sense of things so vile and profligate;
"But I'm a cit, such works are lost on me—
"They're knowledge, and (good Lord!) philosophy."

"Oh, send him down," the Father soon replied;
"Let me behold him, and my skill be tried:
"If care and kindness lose their wonted use,
"Some rougher medicine will the end produce."

Stephen with grief and anger heard his doom—
"Go to the farmer? to the rustic's home?
"Curse the base threat'ning—" "Nay, child, never curse;
"Corrupted long, your case is growing worse."
"I!" quoth the youth; "I challenge all mankind
"To find a fault; what fault have you to find?
"Improve I not in manner, speech, and grace?
"Inquire—my friends will tell it to your face;
"Have I been taught to guard his kine and sheep?
"A man like me has other things to keep;
"This let him know."—"It would his wrath excite:
"But come, prepare, you must away to-night."
"What! leave my studies, my improvements leave,
"My faithful friends and intimates to grieve?"—
"Go to your father, Stephen, let him see
"All these improvements; they are lost on me."

[2] ["Mr. Crabbe continued all through his residence in Suffolk the botanical and entomological studies to which he had been so early devoted. This devotion appeared to proceed purely from the love of science and the increase of knowledge; at all events he never seemed to be captivated with the mere beauty of natural objects, or even to catch any taste for the arrangement of his own specimens. Within the house was a kind of scientific confusion; in the garden the usual showy foreigners gave place to the most scarce flowers, and especially to the rarer weeds, of Britain; and these were scattered here and there only for preservation. In fact, he neither loved order for its own sake, nor had any very high opinion of that passion in others: witness his words, in the tale of Stephen Jones, the 'Learned Boy,'—

'The love of order—I the thing receive,' &c.

Whatever truth there may be in these lines, it is certain that this insensibility to the beauty of order was a defect in his own mind, arising from what I must call his want of taste."—*Life, antè*, p. 46.]

The Youth, though loth, obey'd, and soon he saw
The Farmer-father, with some signs of awe;
Who, kind, yet silent, waited to behold
How one would act, so daring, yet so cold:
And soon he found, between the friendly pair
That secrets pass'd which he was not to share;
But he resolved those secrets to obtain,
And quash rebellion in his lawful reign.

Stephen, though vain, was with his father mute;
He fear'd a crisis, and he shunn'd dispute;
And yet he long'd with youthful pride to show
He knew such things as farmers could not know;
These to the Grandam he with freedom spoke,
Saw her amazement, and enjoy'd the joke:
But on the father when he cast his eye,
Something he found that made his valour shy;
And thus there seem'd to be a hollow truce,
Still threat'ning something dismal to produce.

Ere this the Father at his leisure read
The son's choice volumes, and his wonder fled;
He saw how wrought the works of either kind
On so presuming, yet so weak a mind;
These in a chosen hour he made his prey,
Condemn'd, and bore with vengeful thoughts away;
Then in a close recess the couple near,
He sat unseen to see, unheard to hear.

There soon a trial for his patience came;
Beneath were placed the Youth and ancient Dame,
Each on a purpose fix'd—but neither thought
How near a foe, with power and vengeance fraught.

And now the matron told, as tidings sad,
What she had heard of her beloved lad;
How he to graceless, wicked men gave heed,
And wicked books would night and morning read;
Some former lectures she again began,
And begg'd attention of her little man;
She brought, with many a pious boast, in view
His former studies, and condemn'd the new:
Once he the names of saints and patriarchs old,
Judges and kings, and chiefs and prophets, told;
Then he in winter-nights the Bible took,
To count how often in the sacred book
The sacred name appear'd, and could rehearse
Which were the middle chapter, word, and verse,
The very letter in the middle placed,
And so employ'd the hours that others waste.

"Such wert thou once; and now, my child, they say
"Thy faith like water runneth fast away;
"The prince of devils hath, I fear, beguiled
"The ready wit of my backsliding child."

On this, with lofty looks, our Clerk began
His grave rebuke, as he assumed the man.—

"There is no devil," said the hopeful youth,
"Nor prince of devils: that I know for truth.
"Have I not told you how my books describe
"The arts of priests, and all the canting tribe?
"Your Bible mentions Egypt, where it seems
"Was Joseph found when Pharaoh dream'd his dreams:
"Now in that place, in some bewilder'd head,
"(The learned write,) religious dreams were bred;
"Whence through the earth, with various forms combined,
"They came to frighten and afflict mankind,
"Prone (so I read) to let a priest invade
"Their souls with awe, and by his craft be made
"Slave to his will, and profit to his trade:
"So say my books, and how the rogues agreed
"To blind the victims, to defraud and lead;
"When joys above to ready dupes were sold,
"And hell was threaten'd to the shy and cold.

"Why so amazed, and so prepared to pray?
"As if a Being heard a word we say:
"This may surprise you; I myself began
"To feel disturb'd, and to my Bible ran;
"I now am wiser—yet agree in this,
"The book has things that are not much amiss;
"It is a fine old work, and I protest
"I hate to hear it treated as a jest:
"The book has wisdom in it, if you look
"Wisely upon it as another book."

"Oh! wicked! wicked! my unhappy child,
"How hast thou been by evil men beguiled!"

"How! wicked, say you? You can little guess
"The gain of that which you call wickedness:
"Why, sins you think it sinful but to name
"Have gain'd both wives and widows wealth and fame;
"And this because such people never dread
"Those threaten'd pains; hell comes not in their head:
"Love is our nature, wealth we all desire,
"And what we wish 't is lawful to acquire;
"So say my books—and what beside they show
"'T is time to let this honest Farmer know.
"Nay, look not grave; am I commanded down
"To feed his cattle and become his clown?
"Is such his purpose? then he shall be told
"The vulgar insult—
Hold, in mercy hold!—
"Father, oh! father! throw the whip away;
"I was but jesting; on my knees I pray—
"There, hold his arm—oh! leave us not alone:
"In pity cease, and I will yet atone
"For all my sin."——In vain; stoke after stroke,
On side and shoulder, quick as mill-wheels broke;
Quick as the patient's pulse, who trembling cried,
And still the parent with a stroke replied;
Till all the medicine he prepared was dealt,
And every bone the precious influence felt;
Till all the panting flesh was red and raw,
And every thought was turn'd to fear and awe;
Till every doubt to due respect gave place.—
Such cures are done when doctors know the case.

"Oh! I shall die—my father! do receive
"My dying words; indeed I do believe.
"The books are lying books, I know it well;
"There is a devil, oh! there is a hell;
"And I'm a sinner: spare me, I am young,
"My sinful words were only on my tongue;

" My heart consented not; 't is all a lie:
" Oh! spare me then, I'm not prepared to die."

" Vain, worthless, stupid wretch!" the Father cried;
" Dost thou presume to teach? art thou a guide?
" Driveller and dog, it gave the mind distress
" To hear thy thoughts in their religious dress;
" Thy pious folly moved my strong disdain,
" Yet I forgave thee for thy want of brain;
" But Job in patience must the man exceed
" Who could endure thee in thy present creed.
" Is it for thee, thou idiot, to pretend
" The wicked cause a helping hand to lend?
" Canst thou a judge in any question be?
" Atheists themselves would scorn a friend like thee.

" Lo! yonder blaze thy worthies; in one heap
" Thy scoundrel favourites must for ever sleep:
" Each yields its poison to the flame in turn,
" Where whores and infidels are doom'd to burn;
" Two noble fagots made the flame you see,
" Reserving only two fair twigs for thee;
" That in thy view the instruments may stand,
" And be in future ready for my hand:
" The just mementos that, though silent, show
" Whence thy correction and improvements flow;
" Beholding these, thou wilt confess their power,
" And feel the shame of this important hour.

" Hadst thou been humble, I had first design'd
" By care from folly to have freed thy mind;
" And when a clean foundation had been laid,
" Our priest, more able, would have lent his aid:
" But thou art weak, and force must folly guide;
" And thou art vain, and pain must humble pride:
" Teachers men honour, learners they allure;
" But learners teaching, of contempt are sure;
" Scorn is their certain meed, and smart their only cure!"

END OF THE TALES.[3]

[3] [The elegant and judicious critic of these Tales in the 'Edinburgh Review' for 1812 thus concludes his article:—" The last tale is the history of a poor, weakly, paltry lad, who is sent up from the country to be a clerk in town; and learns by slow degrees to affect freethinking, and to practise dissipation. Upon the tidings of which happy conversion, his father, a worthy old farmer, orders him down again to the country, where he harrows up the soul of his pious grandmother by his infidel prating—and his father reforms him at once by burning his idol book, and treating him with a vigorous course of horsewhipping. There is some humour in this tale, and a great deal of nature and art, especially in the delineation of this slender clerk's gradual corruption, and in the constant and constitutional predominance of weakness and folly in all his vice and virtue, his piety and profaneness.

" We have thus gone through these tales with minuteness. Considering Mr. Crabbe as, upon the whole, the most original writer that has ever come before us, and being at the same time of opinion *that* his writings are destined to a still more extensive popularity than they have yet obtained, we could not resist the temptation of contributing our little aid to the fulfilment of that destiny. It is chiefly for the same reason that we have directed our remarks rather to the *moral* than the literary qualities of his works—to his genius, at least, rather than his taste—and to his thoughts rather than his figures of speech. By far the most remarkable thing in his writings is the prodigious mass of original observations and reflections they everywhere exhibit, and that extraordinary power of conceiving and representing an imaginary object, whether physical or intellectual, with such a rich and complete accompaniment of circumstances and details as few ordinary observers either perceive or remember in realities—a power which must for ever entitle him to the very first rank among descriptive poets, and, when directed to worthy objects, to a rank inferior to none in the highest departments of poetry.

" We think that many of Mr. Crabbe's stories may be ranked by the side of the inimitable tales of Miss Edgeworth, and are calculated to do nearly as much good among that part of the population with which they are principally occupied. But it is not only on account of the *moral* benefit which we think they may derive from them that we would peculiarly recommend the writings of Mr. Crabbe to that great proportion of our readers which must necessarily belong to the middling or humbler classes of the community: we are persuaded that they will derive more pleasure from them than readers of any other description. Those who do not belong to that rank of society with which this powerful writer is chiefly conversant in his poetry, or who have not at least gone much among them, and attended diligently to their characters and occupations, can neither be half aware of the exquisite fidelity of his delineations, nor feel in their full force the better part of the emotions which he has suggested. Vehement passion, indeed, is of all ranks and conditions, and its language and external indications nearly the same in all. Like highly rectified spirit, it blazes and inflames with equal force and brightness from whatever materials it is extracted. But all the softer and kindlier affections, all the social anxieties that mix with our daily hopes, and endear our home, and colour our existence, wear a different livery, and are written in a different character, in almost every great *caste* or division of society; and the heart is warmed and the spirit is touched by their delineation, exactly in the same proportion in which we are familiar with the types by which they are represented. When Burns, in his better days, walked out on a fine summer morning with Dugald Stewart, and the latter observed to him what a beauty the scattered cottages, with their white walls and curling smoke shining in the silent sun, imparted to the landscape, the peasant-poet observed that *he* felt that beauty ten times more strongly than his companion, and that it was necessary to be a cottager to know what pure and tranquil pleasures nestled below those lowly roofs, or to read in their external appearance the *signs* of so many heartfelt and long-remembered enjoyments. In the same way, the humble and patient hopes, the depressing embarrassments, the little mortifications, the slender triumphs, and strange temptations which occur in middling life, and are the theme of Mr. Crabbe's finest and most touching representations, can only be guessed at by those who glitter in the higher walks of existence; while they must raise a tumultuous throb and many a fond recollection in the breasts of those to whom they reflect so truly the image of their own estate, and reveal so clearly the secrets of their habitual sensations.

We cannot help thinking, therefore, that, though such writings as are now before us must give pleasure to all persons of taste and sensibility, they will give by far the greatest pleasure to those whose condition is least remote from that of the beings with whom they are occupied. But we think also that it was wise and meritorious in Mr. Crabbe to occupy himself with such beings. In this country there probably are not less than *two hundred thousand* persons who read for amusement or instruction among *the middling classes* of society. In the higher classes there are not as many as *twenty thousand*. It is easy to see therefore which a poet should choose to please for his own glory and emolument, and which he should wish to delight and amend out of mere philanthropy. The fact too, we believe, is, that a great part of the larger body are to the full as well educated and as high-minded as the smaller; and, though their taste may not be so correct and fastidious, we are persuaded that their sensibility is greater."

It may be proper to observe, by the way, that, in another part of the same paper, the writer (probably Mr. Jeffrey) explains the sense he attaches to a vague phrase in the last of these interesting paragraphs. He says,—" By *the middling classes* we mean almost all those who are below the sphere of what is called fashionable or public life, and who do not aim at distinction or notoriety beyond the circle of their equals in fortune and situation."]

FLIRTATION:

A DIALOGUE.[1]

FROM her own room, in summer's softest eve,
Stepp'd *Celia* forth her *Delia* to receive,—
Joy in her looks, that half her tale declared.

C.—War and the waves my fav'rite Youth have spared;
Faithful and fond, through many a painful year,
My Charles will come——Do give me joy, my dear.

D.—I give you joy, and so may he; but still,
'T is right to question if 't is sure he will;
A sailor's open honest heart we prize,
But honest sailors have their ears and eyes.

C.—Oh! but he surely will on me depend,
Nor dare to doubt the firmness of his friend.

D.—Be not secure; the very best have foes,
And facts they would not to the world expose;
And these he may be told, if he converse with those.

C.—Speak you in friendship?—let it be sincere
And naked truth,—and what have I to fear?

D.—I speak in friendship; and I do confess,
If I were you, the Truth should wear a dress:
If Charles should doubt, as lovers do, though blind,
Would you to him present the naked mind?
If it were clear as crystal, yet it checks
One's joy to think that he may fancy specks;
And now, in five long years, we scarcely know
How the mind gets them, and how large they grow.
Let woman be as rigid as a nun,
She cannot censures and surmises shun.
Wonder not, then, at tales that Scandal tells—
Your father's rooms were not like sisters' cells;
Nor pious monks came there, nor prosing friars,
But well-dress'd captains and approving squires.

C.—What these to me, admit th' account be true?

D.—Nay, that yourself describe—they came to you!

C.—Well! to my friend I may the truth confess,
Poor Captain Glimmer loved me to excess;
Flintham, the young solicitor, that wrote
Those pretty verses, he began to dote;
That Youth from Oxford, when I used to stop
A moment with him, at my feet would drop;
Nor less your Brother, whom, for your dear sake,
I to my favour often used to take:
And was, vile world! my character at stake?
If such reports my Sailor's ear should reach,
What jealous thoughts and fancies may they teach!
If without cause ill-judging men suspect,
What may not all these harmless truths effect?
And what, my Delia, if our virtues fail,
What must we fear if conscious we are frail?
And well you know, my friend, nor fear t' impart,
The tender frailties of the yielding heart.

D.—Speak for yourself, fair lady! speak with care;
I, not your frailties, but your suffering share:
You may my counsel, if you will, refuse;
But pray beware how you my name accuse.

C.—Accuse you! No! there is no need of one
To do what long the public voice has done!
What misses then at school forget the fall
Of Ensign Bloomer when he leap'd the wall?
That was a first exploit, and we were witness all;
And that sad night, upon my faithful breast,
We wept together till we sank to rest;
You own'd your love——

D.—A girl, a chit, a child!
Am I for this, and by a friend, reviled?

C.—Then lay your hand, fair creature! on your heart,
And say how many there have had a part:
Six I remember; and, if Fame be true,
The handsome Serjeant had his portion too.

D.—A Serjeant! Madam, if I might advise,
Do use some small discretion in such lies:
A Serjeant, Celia?——

C.—Handsome, smart, and clean.
Yes! and the fellow had a noble mien,

[1] [Written in May, 1816.]

That might excuse you had you giv'n your hand,—
But this your father could not understand.

D.—Mercy! how pert and flippant are you grown,
As if you 'd *not* a secret of your own!
Yet would you tremble should your Sailor know
What I or my small cabinet could show:
He might suspect a heart with many a wound,
Shallow and deep, could never more be sound;
That of one pierced so oft, so largely bled,
The feeling ceases and the love is dead;
But sense exists, and passion serves instead.

C.—Injurious Delia! cold, reproachful maid!
Is thus my confidential faith repaid?
Is this the counsel that we two have held
When duty trembled and desire rebell'd;
The sister-vows we made, through many a night,
To aid each other in the arduous fight
With the harsh-minded powers who never think
What nature needs, nor will at weakness wink?
And now, thou cruel girl! is all forgot,
The wish oft whisper'd, the imagined lot,
The secret Hymen, the sequester'd cot?
And will you thus our bond of friendship rend,
And join the world in censure of your friend?
Oh! 't is not right! as all with scorn must see,
Although the certain mischief falls on me.

D.—Nay, never weep! but let this kiss restore,
And make our friendship perfect as before;
Do not our wiser selves ourselves condemn?
And yet we dearly love their faults and them.
So our reproofs to tender minds are shown,
We treat their wanderings as we treat our own;
We are each other's conscience, and we tell
Our friend her fault, because we wish her well;
We judge, nay prejudge, what may be her case,
Fore-arm the soul, and shield her from disgrace.
Creatures in prison, ere the trying day,
Their answers practise, and their powers essay.
By means like these they guard against surprise,
And all the puzzling questions that may rise.

"Guilty or not?" His lawyer thus address'd
A wealthy rogue. "Not guilty, I protest."
"Why, then, my friend, we 've nothing here to say,
"But you 're in danger! prithee heed your way:
"*You* know your truth, *I* where your error lies:
"From your '*Not* guilty' will your danger rise."
"Oh! but I *am*, and I have here the gain
"Of wicked craft."—"Then let it *here* remain;
"For we must guard it by a sure defence,
"And not professions of your innocence;
"For that 's the way, whatever you suppose,
"To slip your neck within the ready noose."

Thus, my beloved friend, a girl, if wise,
Upon her Prudence, not her Truth, relies.
It is confess'd, that not the good and pure
Are in this world of calumny secure;
And therefore never let a lass rely
Upon her goodness and her chastity:
Her very virtue makes her heedless: youth
Reveals imprudent, nay injurious, truth;
Whereas, if conscious that she merit blame,
She grows discreet, and well defends her fame;
And thus, offending, better makes her way—
As Joseph Surface argues in the play—
Than when in virtue's strength she proudly stood,
So wrongly right, and so absurdly good.

Now, when your Charles shall be your judge, and try
His own dear damsel—questioning how and why—
Let her be ready, arm'd with prompt reply;
No hesitation let the man discern,
But answer boldly, then accuse in turn;
Some trifling points with candid speech confess'd,
You gain a monstrous credit for the rest.
Then may you wear the Injured Lady frown,
And with your anger keep his malice down;
Accuse, condemn, and make him glad at heart
To sue for pardon when you come to part;
But let him have it; let him go in peace,
And all inquiries of themselves will cease;
To touch him nearer, and to hold him fast,
Have a few tears *in petto* at the last;
But, this with care! for 't is a point of doubt,
If you should end with weeping or without.
'T is true you much affect him by your pain,
But he may want to prove his power again;
And, then, it spoils the look, and hurts the eyes—
A girl is never handsome when she cries.
Take it for granted, in a general way,
The more you weep for men, the more you may.
Save your resources; for though now you cry
With good effect, you may not by and by.
It is a knack; and there are those that weep
Without emotion that a man may sleep;
Others disgust—t' is genius, not advice,
That will avail us in a thing so nice.
If you should love him, you have greater need
Of all your care, and may not then succeed:—
For that 's our bane—we should be conquerors all
With hearts untouch'd—our feelings cause our fall.
But your experience aids you: you can hide
Your real weakness in your borrow'd pride.

But to the point: should so the Charge be laid,
That nought against it fairly can be said—
How would you act? You would not then confess?

C.—Oh! never! no!—nor even my Truth profess!
To mute contempt I would alone resort
For the Reporters, and for their Report.
If he profess'd forgiveness, I would cry—
"Forgive such faithlessness! so would not I.
"Such errors pardon! he that so would act
"Would, I am sure, be guilty of the fact;
"Charles, if I thought your spirit was so mean,
"I would not longer in your walks be seen:
"Could you such woman for a moment prize?
"You might forgive her, but you must despise."

D.—Bravo, my girl! 't is then our sex command,
When we can seize the weapon in their hand,
When we their charge so manage, that 't is found
To save the credit it was meant to wound.

Those who by reasons their acquittal seek,
Make the whole sex contemptible and weak;
This, too, observe—that men of sense in love
Dupes more complete than fools and blockheads prove;
For all that knowledge, lent them as a guide,
Goes off entirely to the lady's side;
Whereas the blockhead rather sees the more,
And gains perception that he lack'd before.
His honest passion blinds the man of sense,
While want of feeling is the fool's defence;
Arm'd with insensibility he comes,
When more repell'd he but the more assumes,
And thus succeeds where fails the man of wit;
For where we cannot conquer we submit.

But come, my love! let us examine now
These Charges all;—say, what shall we avow,
Admit, deny; and which defend, and how?
That old affair between your friend and you,
When your fond Sailor bade his home adieu,
May be forgotten; yet we should prepare
For all events: and are you guarded there?

C.—Oh! 't is long since—I might the whole deny—
" So poor and so contemptible a lie!
" Charles, if 't is pleasant to abuse your friend,
" Let there be something that she may defend;
" This is too silly—"

D.—Well you may appear
With so much spirit—not a witness near;
Time puzzles judgment, and, when none explain,
You may assume the airs of high disdain.
But for my Brother: night and morn were you
Together found, th' inseparable two,
Far from the haunts of vulgar prying men—
In the old abbey—in the lonely glen—
In the beech-wood—within the quarry made
By hands long dead—within the silent glade,
Where the moon gleams upon the spring that flows
By the grey willows as they stand in rows—
Shall I proceed? there 's not a quiet spot
In all the parish where the pair were not,
Oft watch'd, oft seen. You must not so despise
This weighty charge—Now, what will you devise?

C.—" Her brother! What, sir? jealous of a child!
" A friend's relation! Why, the man is wild!
" A boy not yet at college! Come, this proves
" Some truth in you! This is a freak of Love's:
" I must forgive it, though I know not how
" A thing so very simple to allow.
" Pray, if I meet my cousin's little boy,
" And take a kiss, would that your peace annoy?
" But I remember Delia—yet to give
" A thought to this is folly, as I live—
" But I remember Delia made her prayer
" That I would try and give the Boy an air;
" Yet awkward he, for all the pains we took—
" A bookish boy, his pleasure is his book;
" And since the lad is grown to man's estate,
" We never speak—your bookish youth I hate."

D.—Right! and he cannot tell, with all his art,
Our father's will compell'd you both to part.

C.—Nay, this is needless—

D.—Oh! when you are tried,
And taught for trial, must I feed your pride?
Oh! that 's the vice of which I still complain:
Men could not triumph were not women vain.
But now proceed—say *boyhood* in this case
(The last obscure one) shields you from disgrace.
But what of Shelley? all your foes can prove,
And all your friends, that here indeed was love.
For three long months you met as lovers meet,
And half the town has seen him at your feet;
Then, on the evil day that saw you part,
Your ashy looks betray'd your aching heart.
With this against you——

C. This, my watchful friend,
Confess I cannot; therefore must defend.

" Shelley! dear Charles, how enter'd he your mind?
" Well may they say that jealousy is blind!
" Of all the men who talk'd with me of love,
" His were the offers I could least approve;
" My father's choice—and, Charles, you must agree
" That my good father seldom thinks with me—
" Or his had been the grief, while thou wert toss'd at sea!
" It was so odious—when that man was near,
" My father never could himself appear;
" Had I received his fav'rite with a frown,
" Upon my word he would have knock'd me down.

D.—Well! grant you durst not frown—but people say
That you were dying when he went away:—
Yes! you were ill! of that no doubts remain;
And how explain it?—

C.—Oh! I 'll soon explain:—

" I sicken'd, say you, when the man was gone?
" Could I be well, if sickness would come on?
" Fact follows fact: but is 't of Nature's laws
" That one of course must be the other's cause?
" Just as her husband tried his fav'rite gun,
" My cousin brought him forth his first-born son.
" The birth might either flash or fright succeed,
" But neither, sure, were causes of the deed.
" That Shelley left us, it is very true—
" That sickness found me, I confess it too;
" But that the one was cause, and one effect,
" Is a conceit I utterly reject.
" You may, my Friend, demonstrate, if you please,
" That disappointment will bring on disease;
" But, if it should, I would be glad to know
" If 't is a quinsy that such griefs bestow?
" A heart may suffer, if a lady dote;
" But will she feel her anguish in the throat?
" I 've heard of pangs that tender folks endure,
" But not that linctuses and blisters cure."

Your thoughts, my Delia?—

D.—What I think of this?
Why! if he smile, it is not much amiss:
But there are humours; and, by them possess'd,
A lover will not hearken to a jest.

Well, let this pass!—but, for the next affair:
We know your father was indignant there;
He hated Miller. Say! if Charles should press
For explanation, what would you confess?
You cannot there on his commands presume;
Besides, you fainted in a public room;
There own'd your flame, and, like heroic maid,
The sovereign impulse of your will obey'd.
What, to your thinking, was the world's disdain?
You could retort its insolence again:
Your boundless passion boldly you avow'd,
And spoke the purpose of your soul aloud:
Associates, servants, friends, alike can prove
The world-defying force of Celia's love.
Did she not wish, nay vow, to poison her
Whom, some durst whisper, Damon could prefer?
And then that frantic quarrel at the ball—
It must be known, and he will hear it all.
Nay! never frown, but cast about, in time,
How best to answer what he thinks a crime:
For what he thinks might have but little weight,
If you could answer—

C.—Then I 'll answer straight—
Not without Truth; for who would vainly tell
A wretched lie, when Truth might serve as well?
Had I not fever? Is not that the bane
Of human wisdom? Was I not insane?

"Oh! Charles, no more! would you recall the day
"When it pleased Fate to take my wits away?
"How can I answer for a thousand things
"That this disorder to the sufferer brings?
"Is it not known, the men whom you dislike
"Are those whom now the erring fancy strike?
"Nor would it much surprise me, if 't were true,
"That in those days of dread I slighted you:
"When the poor mind, illumined by no spark
"Of reason's light, was wandering in the dark,
"You must not wonder, if the vilest train
"Of evil thoughts were printed on the brain;
"Nor if the loyal and the faithful prove
"False to their king, and faithless to their love."
Your thoughts on this?

D.—With some you may succeed
By such bold strokes; but they must love indeed.

C.—Doubt you his passion?—

D.—But, in five long years
The passion settles—then the reason clears:
Turbid is love, and to ferment inclined,
But by and by grows sober and refined.
And peers for facts; but if one can't rely
On truth, one takes one's chance—you can but try.

Yet once again I must attention ask
To a new Charge, and then resign my task.
I would not hurt you; but confess at least
That you were partial to that handsome Priest;
Say what they will of his religious mind,
He was warm-hearted, and to ladies kind;
Now, with his reverence you were daily seen,
When it was winter and the weather keen;
Traced to the mountains when the winds were strong,
And roughly bore you, arm in arm, along—
That wintry wind, inspired by love or zeal,
You were too faithful or too fond to feel.
Shielded from inward and from outward harm
By the strong spirit and the fleshly arm—
The winter-garden you could both admire,
And leave his sisters at the parlour fire;
You trusted not your speech these dames among—
Better the teeth should chatter than the tongue!
Did not your father stop the pure delight
Of this perambulating Love at night?
It is reported that his craft contrived
To get the Priest with expedition wived
And sent away; for fathers will suspect
Her inward worth, whose ways are incorrect.
Patience, my dear! your Lover *will* appear;
At this new tale, then, what will be your cheer?

"I hear," says he,—and he will look as grim
As if he heard his lass accusing him—
"I hear, my Celia, your alluring looks
"Kept the young Curate from his holy books;
"Parsons, we know, advise their flocks to pray;
"But 't is their duty—not the better they;
"'T is done for policy, for praise, for pay:
"Or, let the very best be understood,
"They 're men, you know, and men are flesh and blood.
"Now, they do say—but let me not offend—
"You were too often with this pious friend,
"And spent your time"——

C.—"As people ought to spend.
"And, sir, if you of some divine would ask
"Aid in your doubts, it were a happy task;
"But you—alas, the while!—are not perplex'd
"By the dark meaning of a threat'ning text;
"You rather censure her who spends her time
"In search of Truth, as if it were a crime!
"Could I your dread of vulgar scandal feel,
"To whom should I, in my distress, appeal?
"A time there may be, Charles, indeed there must,
"When you will need a faithful Priest to trust,
"In conscience tender, but in counsel just.
"Charles, for my Fame I would in prudence strive,
"And, if I could, would keep your Love alive;
"But there are things that our attention claim,
"More near than Love, and more desired than Fame!"

D.—"But why in secret?" he will ask you—

C.—"Why?
"Oh! Charles, could you the doubting spirit spy,
"Had you such fears, all hearers you would shun;
"What one confesses should be heard by one.

"Your mind is gross, and you have dwelt so long
"With such companions, that you will be wrong:
"We fill our minds from those with whom we live,
"And as your fears are Nature's, I forgive;
"But learn your peace and my good name to prize,
"And fears of fancy let us both despise."

D.—Enough, my friend! Now let the man advance—
You are prepared, and nothing leave to chance:
'T is not sufficient that we 're pure and just;
The wise to nothing but their wisdom trust.

Will he himself appear, or will he send,
Duteous as warm! and not alarm my friend?

We need not ask—behold! his servant comes:
His father's livery! no fond heart presumes:
Thus he prepares you—kindly gives you space
To arm your mind and rectify your face.
Now, read your letter—while my faithful heart
Feels all that his can dictate or impart.

Nay! bless you, love! what melancholy tale
Conveys that paper? Why so deadly pale?
It is his sister's writing, but the seal
Is red: he lives. What is it that you feel?

C.—O! my dear friend! let us from man retreat,
Or never trust him if we chance to meet—
The fickle wretch! that from our presence flies
To any flirt that any place supplies,
And laughs at vows!—but see the Letter!—here—
"*Married at Guernsey!!!*"—Oh! the Villain, dear!

TALES OF THE HALL.[1]

TO HER GRACE

THE DUCHESS OF RUTLAND.[2]

MADAM,

IT is the privilege of those who are placed in that elevated situation to which your Grace is an ornament, that they give honour to the person upon whom they confer a favour. When I dedicate to your Grace the fruits of many years, and speak of my debt to the House of Rutland, I feel that I am not without pride in the confession, nor insensible to the honour which such gratitude implies. Forty years have elapsed since this debt commenced. On my entrance into the cares of life, and while contending with its difficulties, a Duke and Duchess of Rutland observed and protected me—in my progress, a Duke and Duchess of Rutland favoured and assisted me—and, when I am retiring from the world, a Duke and Duchess of Rutland receive my thanks, and accept my offering. All, even in this world of mutability, is not change. I have experienced unvaried favour—I have felt undiminished respect.

With the most grateful remembrance of what I owe, and the most sincere conviction of the little I can return, I present these pages to your Grace's acceptance, and beg leave to subscribe myself,

May it please your Grace,
With respect and gratitude,
Your Grace's
Most obedient and devoted servant,
GEORGE CRABBE.[3]

Trowbridge, June, 1819.

[1] [The 'TALES OF THE HALL' were first published in June 1819, by Mr. Murray, who gave for them, and the copyright of the author's previous works, the sum of three thousand pounds. The reader will find some interesting particulars respecting this purchase in a letter by Mr. Moore, printed in the present collection (pp. 74-76).

These 'Tales' occupied Mr. Crabbe during the years 1817 and 1818; and it appears, from a letter to Mrs. Leadbeater, dated 30th October, 1817, that he originally designed to put them forth under another title.—"I know not," he writes, "how to describe the new, and probably (most probably) the last work I shall publish. My friends decided that 'Remembrances' should be the title. Though a village is the scene of meeting between my two principal characters, and gives occasion to other characters and relations in general, yet I no more describe the manners of village inhabitants. My people are of superior classes, though not the most elevated, and, with a few exceptions, are of educated and cultivated minds and habits. I do not know, on a general view, whether my tragic or lighter Tales, &c., are most in number. Of those equally well executed, the tragic will, I suppose, make the greater impression; but I know not that it requires more attention."—The title under which the Tales eventually appeared was suggested by Mr. Murray; and the reception of the work was highly favourable.—E.]

[2] [Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of Frederick, fifth Earl of Carlisle. Her Grace died at Belvoir Castle, in November, 1825.]

[3] [The following is an extract of a letter written by Mr. Crabbe to the Duke of Rutland early in 1826:—"I am always glad of an occasion for repeating my most sincere acknowledgments of the benefits your Grace has conferred upon me: you have given me all I could desire, and more than I could expect; and though the painful disorder with which I am afflicted allows me but short intervals of relief, and unfits me for many of the enjoyments which I might otherwise take, yet have I, by your Grace's favour, all the comforts that decent circumstances and a respectable situation can afford. *There is a subject* upon which I dare not enter, though I have never ceased to think of it—nor, pardon me, my Lord, if I add, to pray to the Giver of all good things for that consolation which I trust will be granted."]

PREFACE.

If I did not fear that it would appear to my readers like arrogancy, or if it did not seem to myself indecorous to send three volumes of considerable magnitude from the press without preface or apology, without one petition for the reader's attention, or one plea for the writer's defects, I would most willingly spare myself an address of this kind, and more especially for these reasons: first, because a preface is a part of a book seldom honoured by a reader's perusal; secondly, because it is both difficult and distressing to write that which we think will be disregarded; and thirdly, because I do not conceive that I am called upon for such introductory matter by any of the motives which usually influence an author when he composes his prefatory address.

When a writer, whether of poetry or prose, first addresses the public, he has generally something to offer which relates to himself or to his work, and which he considers as a necessary prelude to the work itself, to prepare his readers for the entertainment or the instruction they may expect to receive; for one of these every man who publishes must suppose he affords. This the act itself implies; and in proportion to his conviction of this fact must be his feeling of the difficulty in which he has placed himself: the difficulty consists in reconciling the implied presumption of the undertaking, whether to please or to instruct mankind, with the diffidence and modesty of an untried candidate for fame or favour. Hence originate the many reasons an author assigns for his appearance in that character, whether they actually exist or are merely offered to hide the motives which cannot be openly avowed; namely, the want or the vanity of the man, as his wishes for profit or reputation may most prevail with him.

Now, reasons of this kind, whatever they may be, cannot be availing beyond their first appearance. An author, it is true, may again feel his former apprehensions, may again be elevated or depressed by the suggestions of vanity and diffidence, and may be again subject to the cold and hot fit of aguish expectation; but he is no more a stranger to the press, nor has the motives or privileges of one who is. With respect to myself, it is certain they belong not to me. Many years have elapsed since I became a candidate for indulgence, as an inexperienced writer; and to assume the language of such writer now, and to plead for his indulgences, would be proof of my ignorance of the place assigned to me, and the degree of favour which I have experienced; but of that place I am not uninformed, and with that degree of favour I have no reason to be dissatisfied.

It was the remark of the pious, but on some occasions the querulous, author of the 'Night Thoughts,' that he had "been so long remembered, he was forgotten;" an expression in which there is more appearance of discontent than of submission;[1] if he had patience, it was not the patience that *smiles at grief*.[2] It is not therefore entirely in the sense of the good Doctor that I apply these words to myself or to my more early publications. So many years indeed have passed since their first appearance, that I have no reason to complain on that account if they be now slumbering with other poems of decent reputation in their day—not dead indeed, nor entirely forgotten, but certainly not the subjects of discussion or conversation, as when first introduced to the notice of the public by those whom the public will not forget, whose protection was credit to their author, and whose approbation was fame to them. Still these early publications had so long preceded any other, that, if not altogether unknown, I was when I came again before the public in a situation which excused, and perhaps rendered necessary, some explanation; but this also has passed away, and none of my readers will now take the trouble of making any inquiries respecting my motives for writing or for publishing these Tales, or verses of

[1] [The following is extracted from a letter of Mr. Crabbe's, written in 1817:—"There is, in Dr. Young's life and character, something not easily reconcilable with our respect and veneration. That excessive gloom, with that play of words and that false wit—the dreadful estimate of life, with that perpetual seeking after its emoluments—that strong aspiration after the future enjoyments of the soul, with that cheerful, not to say light, spirit which led him into common and frivolous society—all these have much of that incongruity which the children of infirmity possess, but from which we reasonably expect some to be, in a great measure, free. Young tires in some of the later Nights, I think, but he has fine passages everywhere."]

[2] ["She pined in thought;
And, with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at Grief." *Twelfth Night.*]

any description. Known to each other as readers and author are known, they will require no preface to bespeak their good will, nor shall I be under the necessity of soliciting the kindness which, experience has taught me, endeavouring to merit, I shall not fail to receive.

There is one motive—and it is a powerful one—which sometimes induces an author, and more particularly a poet, to ask the attention of his readers to his prefatory address. This is when he has some favourite and peculiar style or manner which he would explain and defend, and chiefly if he should have adopted a mode of versification of which an uninitiated reader was not likely to perceive either the merit or the beauty. In such case it is natural, and surely pardonable, to assert and to prove, as far as reason will bear us on, that such method of writing has both; to show in what the beauty consists, and what peculiar difficulty there is, which, when conquered, creates the merit. How far any particular poet has or has not succeeded in such attempt is not my business nor my purpose to inquire. I have no peculiar notion to defend, no poetical heterodoxy to support, nor theory of any kind to vindicate or oppose. That which I have used is probably the most common measure in our language; and therefore, whatever be its advantages or defects, they are too well known to require from me a description of the one or an apology for the other.

Perhaps still more frequent than any explanation of the work is an account of the author himself, the situation in which he is placed, or some circumstances of peculiar kind in his life, education, or employment. How often has youth been pleaded for deficiencies or redundancies, for the existence of which youth may be an excuse, and yet be none for their exposure! Age, too, has been pleaded for the errors and failings in a work which the octogenarian had the discernment to perceive, and yet had not the fortitude to suppress. Many other circumstances are made apologies for a writer's infirmities—his much employment and many avocations, adversity, necessity, and the good of mankind. These, or any of them, however availing in themselves, avail not me. I am neither so young nor so old, so much engaged by one pursuit or by many,—I am not so urged by want, or so stimulated by a desire of public benefit,—that I can borrow one apology from the many which I have named. How far they prevail with our readers or with our judges I cannot tell; and it is unnecessary for me to inquire into the validity of arguments which I have not to produce.

If there be any combination of circumstances which may be supposed to affect the mind of a reader, and in some degree to influence his judgment, the junction of youth, beauty, and merit in a female writer may be allowed to do this; and yet one of the most forbidding of titles is 'Poems by a very young Lady,' and this although beauty and merit were largely insinuated. Ladies, it is true, have of late little need of any indulgence as authors, and names may readily be found which rather excite the envy of man than plead for his lenity. Our estimation of title, also, in a writer has materially varied from that of our predecessors: 'Poems by a Nobleman' would create a very different sensation in our minds from that which was formerly excited when they were so announced. A noble author had then no pretensions to a seat so secure on the "sacred hill" that authors not noble, and critics not gentle, dared not attack: and they delighted to take revenge, by their contempt and derision of the poet, for the pain which their submission and respect to the man had cost them. But in our times we find that a nobleman writes, not merely as well, but better than other men; insomuch that readers in general begin to fancy that the Muses have relinquished their old partiality for rags and a garret, and are become altogether aristocratical in their choice. A conceit so well supported by fact would be readily admitted, did it not appear at the same time that there were in the higher ranks of society men who could write as tamely or as absurdly as they had ever been accused of doing. We may therefore regard the works of any noble author as extraordinary productions, but must not found any theory upon them; and, notwithstanding their appearance, must look on genius and talent as we are wont to do on time and chance, that happen indifferently to all mankind.

But, whatever influence any peculiar situation of a writer might have, it cannot be a benefit to me, who have no such peculiarity. I must rely upon the willingness of my readers to be pleased with that which was designed to give them pleasure, and upon the cordiality which naturally springs from a remembrance of our having before parted without any feelings of disgust on the one side, or of mortification on the other.

With this hope I would conclude the present subject; but I am called upon by duty to acknowledge my obligations, and more especially for two of the following Tales—the Story of Lady Barbara in Book XVI., and that of Ellen in Book XVIII. The first of these I owe to the kindness of a fair friend, who will, I hope, accept the thanks which I very gratefully pay, and pardon me if I have not given to her relation the advantages which she had so much reason to expect. The other story, that of Ellen, could I give it in the language of him who related it to me, would please and affect my readers. It is by no means my only debt, though the one I now more particularly acknowledge; for who shall describe all that he gains in the social, the unrestrained, and the frequent conversations with a friend who is at once communicative and judicious?—whose opinions, on all subjects of literary kind, are founded on good taste and exquisite feeling? It is one of the greatest "pleasures of my memory" to recall in absence those conversations; and if I do not in direct terms mention with whom I conversed, it is both because I have no permission, and my readers will have no doubt.

The first intention of the poet must be to please; for, if he means to instruct, he must render the instruction which he hopes to convey palatable and

pleasant. I will not assume the tone of a moralist, nor promise that my relations shall be beneficial to mankind; but I have endeavoured, not unsuccessfully I trust, that, in whatsoever I have related or described, there should be nothing introduced which has a tendency to excuse the vices of man, by associating with them sentiments that demand our respect, and talents that compel our admiration. There is nothing in these pages which has the mischievous effect of confounding truth and error, or confusing our ideas of right and wrong.[3] I know not which is most injurious to the yielding minds of the young—to render virtue less respectable by making its possessors ridiculous, or by describing vice with so many fascinating qualities that it is either lost in the assemblage, or pardoned by the association. Man's heart is sufficiently prone to make excuse for man's infirmity, and needs not the aid of poetry or eloquence to take from vice its native deformity. A character may be respectable with all its faults, but it must not be made respectable by them. It is grievous when genius will condescend to place strong and evil spirits in a commanding view, or excite our pity and admiration for men of talents, degraded by crime, when struggling with misfortune. It is but too true that great and wicked men may be so presented to us as to demand our applause, when they should excite our abhorrence; but it is surely for the interest of mankind, and our own self-direction, that we should ever keep at unapproachable distance our respect and our reproach.

I have one observation more to offer. It may appear to some that a minister of religion, in the decline of life, should have no leisure for such amusements as these; and for them I have no reply;—but to those who are more indulgent to the propensities, the studies, and the habits of mankind, I offer some apology when I produce these volumes, not as the occupations of my life, but the fruits of my leisure, the employment of that time which, if not given to them, had passed in the vacuity of unrecorded idleness, or had been lost in the indulgence of unregistered thoughts and fancies, that melt away in the instant they are conceived, and "*leave not a wreck behind.*"

[3] ["Crabbe is the most moral of all modern poets; Cowper himself was not more so. He has the cause of religion and virtue on his lips and in his heart. The cause for which he pleads has in him an advocate thoroughly sincere and zealous. We know indeed no writer more thoroughly practical. No man who feels the stirrings of evil within him can rise from the perusal of such volumes as these without saying to himself, 'Here is my own individual case; this is the very march of my own feelings and wishes; here is my own precise danger; here I must seek to plant a guard, or this very guilt and misery will be mine.'"—JEFFREY.

"In all the poetry of this extraordinary man we see a constant display of the passions as they are excited and exacerbated by the customs, and laws, and institutions of society. Love, anger, hatred, melancholy, despair, and remorse, in all their infinite modifications, as exhibited by different natures and under different circumstances, are rife throughout all his works; and a perpetual conflict is seen carried on among all the feelings and principles of our nature that can render that nature happy or miserable. We see love breaking through in desperation, but never with impunity, the barriers of human laws; or in hopelessness dying beneath them, with or without its victim. The stream of life flows over a rugged and precipitous channel in the poetry of Crabbe, and we are rarely indeed allowed to sail down it in a reverie or a dream. The pleasure he excites is almost always a troubled pleasure, and accompanied with tears and sighs, or with the profounder agitation of a sorrow that springs out of the conviction, forced upon us, of the most imperfect nature, and therefore the most imperfect happiness, of man. Now, if all this were done in the mere pride of genius and power, we should look on Mr. Crabbe in any other light than as the benefactor of his species. But in the midst of all his skill—all his art—we always see the tenderness of the man's heart; and we hear him, with a broken and melancholy voice, mourning over the woe and wickedness whose picture he has so faithfully drawn. Never in any one instance (and he claims this most boldly in his preface) has he sought to veil or to varnish vice; to confuse our notions of right and wrong; to depreciate moral worth, or exaggerate the value of worldly accomplishments; to cheat us out of our highest sympathies due to defeated or victorious virtue; or to induce us, in blindfolded folly, to bestow them on splendid guilt and dazzling crime. It is his to read aloud to us the records of our own hearts—the book of fate; and he does not close the leaves because too often stained with rueful tears. This world is a world of sin and sorrow; and he thinks, and thinks rightly, that it becomes him who has a gifted sight into its inmost heart to speak of the triumphs of that sin, and the wretchedness *of that* sorrow, to beings who are all born to pass under that twofold yoke. We do not believe that a bad, or even an imperfect, moral can be legitimately drawn from the spirit of any of Mr. Crabbe's poetry."—WILSON.]

TALES OF THE HALL.[1]

BOOK I.

THE HALL.

The Meeting of the Brothers, George and Richard—The Retirement of the elder to his native Village—Objects and Persons whom he found there—The Brother described in various particulars—The Invitation and Journey of the younger—His Soliloquy and Arrival.

THE Brothers met, who many a year had pass'd
Since their last meeting, and that seem'd their last:
They had no parent then or common friend
Who might their hearts to mutual kindness bend;
Who, touching both in their divided state,
Might generous thoughts and warm desires create;
For there are minds whom we must first excite
And urge to feeling, ere they can unite:
As we may hard and stubborn metals beat
And blend together, if we duly heat.

The elder, George, had pass'd his threescore years,
A busy actor, sway'd by hopes and fears
Of powerful kind; and he had fill'd the parts
That try our strength and agitate our hearts.
He married not, and yet he well approved
The social state; but then he rashly loved;
Gave to a strong delusion all his youth,
Led by a vision till alarm'd by truth:
That vision pass'd, and of that truth possess'd,
His passions wearied and disposed to rest,
George yet had will and power a place to choose,
Where Hope might sleep, and terminate her views.

He chose his native village, and the hill
He climb'd a boy had its attraction still;
With that small brook beneath, where he would stand
And stooping fill the hollow of his hand
To quench th' impatient thirst—then stop awhile
To see the sun upon the waters smile,
In that sweet weariness, when, long denied,
We drink and view the fountain that supplied
The sparkling bliss—and feel, if not express,
Our perfect ease in that sweet weariness.

The oaks yet flourish'd in that fertile ground,
Where still the church with lofty tower was found;
And still that Hall, a first, a favourite view,
But not the elms that form'd its avenue;
They fell ere George arrived, or yet had stood,
For he in reverence held the living wood,
That widely spreads in earth the deepening root,
And lifts to heaven the still aspiring shoot:
From age to age they fill'd a growing space,
But hid the mansion they were meant to grace.

It was an ancient, venerable Hall,
And once surrounded by a moat and wall;
A part was added by a squire of taste,
Who, while unvalued acres ran to waste,
Made spacious rooms, whence he could look about
And mark improvements as they rose without:
He fill'd the moat, he took the wall away,
He thinn'd the park, and bade the view be gay:
The scene was rich, but he who should behold
Its worth was poor, and so the whole was sold.

Just then the Merchant from his desk retired,
And made the purchase that his heart desired;

[1] ["The plan of the work—for it has more of plan and unity than any of Mr. Crabbe's former productions—is abundantly simple. Two brothers, both past middle age, meet together, for the first time since their infancy, in the Hall of their native parish, which the elder and richer had purchased as a place of retirement for his declining age; and there tell each other their own history, and then that of their guests, neighbours, and acquaintances. The senior is much the richer, and a bachelor—having been a little distasted with the sex by the unlucky result of a very extravagant passion. He is, moreover, rather *too* reserved, and somewhat Torvish, though with an excellent heart and a powerful understanding. The younger *is* very sensible also, but more open, social, and talkative; a happy husband and father, with a tendency to Whiggism, and some notion of reform, and a disposition to think well both of men and women. The visit lasts two or three weeks in autumn; and the Tales are told in the after-dinner *têtes-à-têtes* that take place in that time between the worthy brothers over their bottle.

"The married man, however, wearies at length for his wife and children; and his brother lets him go with more coldness than he had expected. He goes with him a stage on the way; and, inviting him to turn aside a little to look at a new purchase he had made of a sweet farm with a neat mansion, he finds his wife and children comfortably settled there, and all ready to receive them; and speedily discovers that he is, by his brother's bounty, the proprietor of a fair domain within a morning's ride of the Hall, where they may discuss politics and tell tales any afternoon they may think proper."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1819.]

The Hall of Binning, his delight a boy,
That gave his fancy in her flight employ;
Here, from his father's modest home, he gazed,
Its grandeur charm'd him, and its height amazed:
Work of past ages; and the brick-built place
Where he resided was in much disgrace;
But never in his fancy's proudest dream
Did he the master of that mansion seem:
Young was he then, and little did he know
What years on care and diligence bestow;
Now young no more, retired to views well known,
He finds that object of his awe his own:
The Hall at Binning!—how he loves the gloom
That sun-excluding window gives the room;
Those broad brown stairs on which he loves to tread;
Those beams within; without, that length of lead,
On which the names of wanton boys appear,
Who died old men, and left memorials here,
Carvings of feet and hands, and knots and flowers,
The fruits of busy minds in idle hours!
Here, while our squire the modern part possess'd,
His partial eye upon the old would rest;
That best his comforts gave—this sooth'd his feelings best.

Here, day by day, withdrawn from busy life,
No child t' awake him, to engage no wife,
When friends were absent, not to books inclined,
He found a sadness steal upon his mind;
Sighing, the works of former lords to see,
"I follow them," he cried, "but who will follow me?"

Some ancient men whom he a boy had known
He knew again, their changes were his own;
Comparing now he view'd them, and he felt
That time with him in lenient mood had dealt:
While some the half-distinguish'd features bore
That he was doubtful if he saw before,
And some in memory lived whom he must see no more.

Here George had found, yet scarcely hoped to find,
Companions meet, minds fitted to his mind;
Here, late and loth, the worthy Rector came,
From College dinners and a Fellow's fame;
Yet, here when fix'd, was happy to behold
So near a neighbour in a friend so old:
Boys on one form they parted, now to meet
In equal state, their Worships on one seat.

Here were a Sister-pair, who seem'd to live
With more respect than affluence can give;
Although not affluent, they, by nature graced,
Had sense and virtue, dignity and taste;
Their minds by sorrows, by misfortunes tried,
Were vex'd and heal'd, were pain'd and purified.

Hither a sage Physician came, and plann'd,
With books his guides, improvements on his land;
Nor less to mind than matter would he give
His noble thoughts, to know how spirits live,
And what is spirit; him his friends advised
To think with fear, but caution he despised,
And hints of fear provoked him till he dared
Beyond himself, nor bold assertion spared,
But fiercely spoke, like those who strongly feel,
"Priests and their craft, enthusiasts and their zeal."

More yet appear'd, of whom as we proceed—
Ah! yield not yet to languor—you shall read.

But ere the events that from this meeting rose,
Be they of pain or pleasure, we disclose,
It is of custom, doubtless is of use,
That we our heroes first should introduce.

Come, then, fair Truth! and let me clearly see
The minds I paint, as they are seen in thee;
To me their merits and their faults impart;
Give me to say, "Frail being! such thou art,"
And closely let me view the naked human heart,

George loved to think; but as he late began
To muse on all the grander thoughts of man,
He took a solemn and a serious view
Of his religion, and he found it true;
Firmly, yet meekly, he his mind applied
To this great subject, and was satisfied.

He then proceeded, not so much intent,
But still in earnest, and to church he went:
Although they found some difference in their creed,
He and his pastor cordially agreed;
Convinced that they who would the truth obtain
By disputation, find their efforts vain;[2]
The church he view'd as liberal minds will view,
And there he fix'd his principles and pew.

He saw, he thought he saw, how Weakness, Pride,
And Habit, draw seceding crowds aside:
Weakness that loves on trifling points to dwell,
Pride that at first from Heaven's own worship fell,
And habit, going where it went before,
Or to the meeting or the tavern-door.

George loved the cause of freedom, but reproved
All who with wild and boyish ardour loved;
Those who believed they never could be free,
Except when fighting for their liberty;
Who by their very clamour and complaint
Invite coercion or enforce restraint:
He thought a trust so great, so good a cause,
Was only to be kept by guarding laws;

2 ["Thousands and tens of thousands of sincere and earnest believers in the Gospel of our Lord, and in the general contents of Scripture, seeking its meaning with veneration and prayer, agree, I cannot doubt, in essentials, but differ in many points, and in some which unwise and uncharitable persons deem of much importance; nay, think that there is no salvation without them. Look at the good—good, comparatively speaking—just, pure, pious—the patient and suffering amongst recorded characters;—and were not they of different opinions in many articles of their faith? and can we suppose their Heavenly Father will select from this number a few, a very few; and that for their assent to certain tenets, which causes, independent of any merit of their own, in all probability, led them to embrace?"—CRABBE's *Letters*.]

For, public blessings firmly to secure,
We must a lessening of the good endure.
The public waters are to none denied—
All drink the stream, but only few must guide;
There must be reservoirs to hold supply,
And channels form'd to send the blessing by;
The public good must be a private care,
None all they would may have, but all a share:
So we must freedom with restraint enjoy,
What crowds possess they will, uncheck'd, destroy;
And hence, that freedom may to all be dealt,
Guards must be fix'd, and safety must be felt.
So thought our squire, nor wish'd the guards t' appear
So strong, that safety might be bought too dear;
The Constitution was the ark that he
Join'd to support with zeal and sanctity,
Nor would expose it, as th' accursed son
His father's weakness, to be gazed upon.[3]

I for that Freedom make, said he, my prayer,
That suits with all, like atmospheric air;
That is to mortal man by heaven assign'd,
Who cannot bear a pure and perfect kind:
The lighter gas, that, taken in the frame,
The spirit heats, and sets the blood in flame;
Such is the freedom which when men approve,
They know not what a dangerous thing they love.[4]

George chose the company of men of sense,
But could with wit in moderate share dispense;
He wish'd in social ease his friends to meet,
When still he thought the female accent sweet;
Well from the ancient, better from the young,
He loved the lispings of the mother tongue.

He ate and drank, as much as men who think
Of life's best pleasures ought to eat or drink;
Men purely temperate might have taken less,
But still he loved indulgence, not excess;
Nor would alone the grants of Fortune taste,
But shared the wealth he judged it crime to waste;
And thus obtain'd the sure reward of care;
For none can spend like him who learns to spare.

Time, thought, and trouble made the man appear—
By nature shrewd—sarcastic and severe;
Still he was one whom those who fully knew
Esteem'd and trusted, one correct and true;
All on his word with surety might depend,
Kind as a man, and faithful as a friend:
But him the many know not, knew not cause
In their new squire for censure or applause;
Ask them, "Who dwelt within that lofty wall?"
And they would say, "The gentleman was tall;
"Look'd old when follow'd, but alert when met,
"And had some vigour in his movements yet;
"He stoops, but not as one infirm; and wears
"Dress that becomes his station and his years."

Such was the man who from the world return'd,
Nor friend nor foe; he prized it not, nor spurn'd;
But came and sat him in his village down,
Safe from its smile, and careless of its frown:
He, fairly looking into life's account,
Saw frowns and favours were of like amount;
And viewing all—his perils, prospects, purse,
He said, "Content! 't is well it is no worse."

Through ways more rough had fortune Richarded,
The world he traversed was the book he read;
Hence clashing notions and opinions strange
Lodged in his mind, all liable to change.
By nature generous, open, daring, free,
The vice he hated was hypocrisy;
Religious notions, in her latter years,
His mother gave, admonish'd by her fears;
To these he added, as he chanced to read
A pious work or learn a Christian creed:
He heard the preacher by the highway side,
The church's teacher and the meeting's guide;
And, mixing all their matters in his brain,
Distill'd a something he could ill explain;
But still it served him for his daily use,
And kept his lively passions from abuse;
For he believed, and held in reverence high,
The truth so dear to man—"not all shall die."[5]
The minor portions of his creed hung loose,
For time to shapen and a whole produce:
This Love effected, and a favourite maid,
With clearer views, his honest flame repaid;
Hers was the thought correct, the hope sublime,
She shaped his creed, and did the work of time.[6]

He spake of freedom as a nation's cause,
And loved, like George, our liberty and laws,
But had more youthful ardour to be free,
And stronger fears for injured liberty:
With him, on various questions that arose,
The monarch's servants were the people's foes;

[3] Genesis, ch. ix. ver. 25.

[4] ["With respect to the parties themselves, Whig and Tory, I can but think, two dispassionate, sensible men, who have seen, read, and observed, will approximate in their sentiments more and more; and if they confer together, and argue—not to convince each other, but for pure information, and with a simple desire for the truth—the ultimate difference will be small indeed. The Tory, for instance, would allow that, but for the Revolution in this country, and the noble stand against the arbitrary steps of the house of Stuart, the kingdom would have been in danger of becoming what France once was; and the Whig must also grant that there is at least an equal danger in an unsettled, undefined democracy, the ever-changing laws of a popular government. Every state is, at times, on the inclination to change; either the *monarchical* or *the* popular interest will predominate; and in the former case, I conceive, the well-meaning Tory will incline to Whiggism,—in the latter, the honest Whig will take the part of declining monarchy."—CRABBE'S *Letters*.]

[5] ["Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei
Vitabit Libitinam."—HOR.]

[6] ["Mr. Crabbe remained at Woodbridge from 1770 to 1775; and while here he formed an attachment to Miss Sarah Elmy, the niece of a wealthy yeoman in the neighbouring village of Parham, an amiable and beautiful girl, who returned his affection, and after a lapse of twelve troubled years became his wife. This virtuous attachment appears to have had the strongest and most beneficial influence on his mind and manners, and consequently on his fortunes. It sustained him through miseries such as few young literary adventurers have ever gone through—it purified his feelings—fixed and enlarged his heart—and inspired his first poetry."—*Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1834.]

And though he fought with all a Briton's zeal,
He felt for France as Freedom's children feel;
Went far with her in what she thought reform,
And hail'd the revolutionary storm;
Yet would not here, where there was least to win,
And most to lose, the doubtful work begin;
But look'd on change with some religious fear,
And cried, with filial dread, "Ah! come not here."

His friends he did not as the thoughtful choose;
Long to deliberate was, he judged, to lose:
Frankly he join'd the free, nor suffer'd pride
Or doubt to part them whom their fate allied;
Men with such minds at once each other aid,
"Frankness," they cry, "with frankness is repaid;
"If honest, why suspect? if poor, of what afraid?
"Wealth's timid votaries may with caution move;
"Be it our wisdom to confide and love."

So pleasures came, not purchased first or plann'd,
But the chance pleasures that the poor command;
They came but seldom, they remain'd not long,
Nor gave him time to question "Are they wrong?"
These he enjoy'd, and left to after time
To judge the folly or decide the crime;
Sure had he been, he had perhaps been pure
From this reproach—but Richard was not sure;
Yet from the sordid vice, the mean, the base,
He stood aloof—death frown'd not like disgrace.

With handsome figure, and with manly air,
He pleased the sex, who all to him were fair;
With filial love he look'd on forms decay'd,
And Admiration's debt to Beauty paid;
On sea or land, wherever Richard went,
He felt affection, and he found content;
There was in him a strong presiding hope
In Fortune's tempests, and it bore him up:
But when that mystic vine his mansion graced,
When numerous branches round his board were placed,
When sighs of apprehensive love were heard,
Then first the spirit of the hero fear'd;
Then he reflected on the father's part,
And all a husband's sorrow touch'd his heart;
Then thought he, "Who will their assistance lend,
"And be the children's guide, the parent's friend?
"Who shall their guardian, their protector be?
"I have a brother—Well!—and so has he."

And now they met: a message—kind, 't is true,
But verbal only—ask'd an interview;
And many a mile, perplex'd by doubt and fear,
Had Richard pass'd, unwilling to appear:
"How shall I now my unknown way explore—
"He proud and rich—I very proud and poor?
"Perhaps my friend a dubious speech mistook,
"And George may meet me with a stranger's look;
"Then to my home when I return again,
"How shall I bear this business to explain,
"And tell of hopes raised high, and feelings hurt, in vain?

"How stands the case? My brother's friend and mine
"Met at an inn and sat them down to dine:
"When, having settled all their own affairs,
"And kindly canvass'd such as were not theirs,
"Just as my friend was going to retire,
"'Stay!—you will see the brother of our squire,'
"Said his companion: 'be his friend, and tell
"'The captain that his brother loves him well,
"'And, when he has no better thing in view,
"'Will be rejoiced to see him—Now, adieu!'

"Well! here I am; and, Brother, take you heed,
"I am not come to flatter you and feed;
"You shall no soother, fawner, hearer find,
"I will not brush your coat, nor smooth your mind;
"I will not hear your tales the whole day long,
"Nor swear you 're right if I believe you wrong:
"Nor be a witness of the facts you state,
"Nor as my own adopt your love or hate:
"I will not earn my dinner when I dine
"By taking all your sentiments for mine;
"Nor watch the guiding motions of your eye
"Before I venture question or reply;
"Nor when you speak affect an awe profound,
"Sinking my voice as if I fear'd the sound;
"Nor to your looks obediently attend,
"The poor, the humble, the dependent friend:
"Yet son of that dear mother could I meet—
"But lo! the mansion—'t is a fine old seat!"

The Brothers met, with both too much at heart
To be observant of each other's part;
"Brother, I 'm glad," was all that George could say,
Then stretch'd his hand, and turn'd his head away;
For he in tender tears had no delight,
But scorn'd the thought and ridiculed the sight;
Yet now with pleasure, though with some surprise,
He felt his heart o'erflowing at his eyes.

Richard, meantime, made some attempts to speak,
Strong in his purpose, in his trial weak:
We cannot nature by our wishes rule,
Nor at our will her warm emotions cool:—
At length affection, like a risen tide,
Stood still, and then seem'd slowly to subside;
Each on the other's looks had power to dwell,
And Brother Brother greeted passing well.[7]

[7] ["The characters of the two brothers are admirably delineated; the elder being a grave, and somewhat formal bachelor, with most of the peculiarities of that class of men—but sensitive, affectionate, and thoughtful; the younger a generous seaman, who, having long buffeted with fortune, and learned many fine virtues in the school of adversity, had rather improvidentially but happily married, and had visited his rich brother with many misgivings of mind and doubts of brotherly reception. There is great tenderness and beauty in all that relates to the affection of these brothers, and the contrast of their characters is throughout admirably sustained. All they have to tell of each other is new, and, consequently, all their relations are given with earnestness and vivacity. Mr. Crabbe lets us in at once to their characters; and, loving the men, we listen with the eager attention of friends to the varied story of their lives."—WILSON.]

BOOK II.

THE BROTHERS.

Further Account of the Meeting—Of the Men—The Mother—The Uncle—The Private Tutor—The Second Husband—Dinner Conversation—School of the Rector and Squire—The Master.

At length the Brothers met, no longer tried
By those strong feelings that in time subside;
Not fluent yet their language, but the eye
And action spoke both question and reply;
Till the heart rested and could calmly feel,
Till the shook compass felt the settling steel;
Till playful smiles on graver converse broke,
And either speaker less abruptly spoke:
Still was there ofttimes silence, silence bless'd,
Expressive,[1] thoughtful—their emotions' rest;
Pauses that came not from a want of thought,
But want of ease, by wearied passion sought;
For souls, when hurried by such powerful force,
Rest, and retrace the pleasure of the course.
They differ'd much, yet might observers trace
Likeness of features both in mind and face;[2]
Pride they possess'd, that neither strove to hide,
But not offensive, not obtrusive pride:
Unlike had been their life, unlike the fruits,
Of different tempers, studies, and pursuits;
Nay, in such varying scenes the men had moved,
'T was passing strange that aught alike they loved:
But all distinction now was thrown apart,
While these strong feelings ruled in either heart.

As various colours in a painted ball
While it has rest are seen distinctly all;
Till, whirl'd around by some exterior force,
They all are blended in the rapid course:[3]
So in repose, and not by passion sway'd,
We saw the difference by their habits made;
But, tried by strong emotions, they became
Fill'd with one love, and were in heart the same;
Joy to the face its own expression sent,
And gave a likeness in the looks it lent.
All now was sober certainty; the joy
That no strong passions swell till they destroy:
For they, like wine, our pleasures raise so high,
That they subdue our strength, and then they die.
George in his brother felt a growing pride,
He wonder'd who that fertile mind supplied—
"Where could the wanderer gather on his road
"Knowledge so various? how the mind this food?
"No college train'd him, guideless through his life,
"Without a friend—not so! he has a wife.
"Ah! had I married, I might now have seen
"My——No! it never, never could have been:
"That long enchantment, that pernicious state!—
"True, I recover'd, but alas! too late.
"And here is Richard, poor indeed—but—nay!
"This is self-torment—foolish thoughts, away!"

Ease leads to habit, as success to ease,
He lives by rule who lives himself to please;
For change is trouble, and a man of wealth
Consults his quiet as he guards his health;
And habit now on George had sovereign power,
His actions all had their accustom'd hour:
At the fix'd time he slept, he walk'd, he read,
Or sought his grounds, his gruel, and his bed;
For every season he with caution dress'd,
And morn and eve had the appropriate vest;
He talk'd of early mists, and night's cold air,
And in one spot was fix'd his worship's chair.
But not a custom yet on Richard's mind
Had force, or him to certain modes confined;
To him no joy such frequent visits paid,
That habit by its beaten track was made:[4]
He was not one who at his ease could say,
"We 'll live to-morrow as we lived to-day;"
But he and his were as the ravens fed,
As the day came it brought the daily bread.

George, born to fortune, though of moderate kind,
Was not in haste his road through life to find:
His father early lost, his mother tried
To live without him, liked it not, and—sigh'd
When for her widow'd hand an amorous youth applied:
She still was young, and felt that she could share
A lover's passion, and a husband's care;
Yet pass'd twelve years before her son was told,
To his surprise, "Your father you behold."
But he beheld not with his mother's eye
The new relation, and would not comply;
But all obedience, all connexion spurn'd,
And fled their home, where he no more return'd.

His father's brother was a man whose mind
Was to his business and his bank confined;
His guardian care the captious nephew sought,
And was received, caress'd, advised, and taught.

"That Irish beggar, whom your mother took,
"Does you this good—he sends you to your book;

[1] ["Come then, expressive Silence! muse His praise."—Thomson.]

[2] [Original MS.:—

Yet with this difference might observers find
Some kindred powers and features of the mind.
A love of honour in both spirits ruled,
But here by temper, there by trouble cool'd;
Their favourite objects, studies, themes, pursuits,
Had various beauties, merits, ends, and fruits.]

[3] ["Crabbe's similes are almost all elaborate and ingenious; and rather seem to be furnished from the effects of a fanciful mind, than to be exhaled by the spontaneous ferment of a heated imagination."—*Edinburgh Review*. Mr. Crabbe was much struck with the sagacity of this remark. On reading it, he said, "Jeffrey is quite right: my usual method has been to think of such illustrations, and insert them *after finishing a tale*."]

[4] [*MS.*:—

Joel nor time nor seasons could command,
He took his comforts as they came to hand:
Nor came they often, nor delay'd so long,
That they were habits either weak or strong;
What seem'd habitual was the urgent force
Of stern necessity that shaped his course.]

" Yet love not books beyond their proper worth,
" But, when they fit you for the world, go forth:
" They are like beauties, and may blessings prove,
" When we with caution study them, or love;
" But when to either we our souls devote,
" We grow unfitted for that world, and dote."

George to a school of higher class was sent,
But he was ever grieving that he went:
A still, retiring, musing, dreaming boy,
He relish'd not their sudden bursts of joy,
Nor the tumultuous pleasures of a rude,
A noisy, careless, fearless multitude:
He had his own delights, as one who flies
From every pleasure that a crowd supplies:
Thrice he return'd, but then was weary grown,
And was indulged with studies of his own.
Still could the Rector and his Friend relate
The small adventures of that distant date;
And Richard listen'd as they spake of time
Pass'd in that world of misery and crime.

Freed from his school, a priest of gentle kind
The uncle found to guide the nephew's mind;
Pleased with his teacher, George so long remain'd,
The mind was weaken'd by the store it gain'd.

His guardian uncle, then on foreign ground,
No time to think of his improvements found;
Nor had the nephew, now to manhood grown,
Talents or taste for trade or commerce shown,
But shunn'd a world of which he little knew,
Nor of that little did he like the view.

His mother chose, nor I the choice upbraid,
An Irish soldier of a house decay'd,
And passing poor, but precious in her eyes
As she in his; they both obtain'd a prize.
To do the captain justice, she might share
What of her jointure his affairs could spare:
Irish he was in his profusion—true,
But he was Irish in affection too;
And though he spent her wealth and made her grieve,
He always said "My dear," and "With your leave."
Him she survived: she saw his boy possess'd
Of manly spirit, and then sank to rest.

Her sons thus left, some legal cause required
That they should meet, but neither this desired:
George, a recluse, with mind engaged, was one
Who did no business, with whom none was done;
Whose heart, engross'd by its peculiar care,
Shared no one's counsel—no one his might share.

Richard, a boy, a lively boy, was told
Of his half-brother, haughty, stern, and cold;
And his boy folly, or his manly pride,
Made him on measures cool and harsh decide:
So, when they met, a distant cold salute
Was of a long-expected day the fruit;
The rest by proxies managed, each withdrew,
Vex'd by the business and the brother too:
But now they met when time had calm'd the mind,
Both wish'd for kindness, and it made them kind:
George had no wife or child, and was disposed
To love the man on whom his hope reposed:
Richard had both; and those so well beloved,
Husband and father were to kindness moved;
And thus th' affections, check'd, subdued, restrain'd,
Rose in their force, and in their fulness reign'd.

The bell now bids to dine: the friendly priest,
Social and shrewd, the day's delight increased:
Brief and abrupt their speeches while they dined,
Nor were their themes of intellectual kind;
Nor, dinner past, did they to these advance,
But left the subjects they discuss'd to chance.

Richard, whose boyhood in the place was spent,
Profound attention to the speakers lent,
Who spake of men; and, as he heard a name,
Actors and actions to his memory came;[5]
Then, too, the scenes he could distinctly trace—
Here he had fought, and there had gain'd a race;
In that church-walk he had affrighted been,
In that old tower he had a something seen;
What time, dismiss'd from school, he upward cast
A fearful look, and trembled as he pass'd.

No private tutor Richard's parents sought,
Made keen by hardship, and by trouble taught:
They might have sent him—some the counsel gave—
Seven gloomy winters of the North to brave,
Where a few pounds would pay for board and bed,
While the poor frozen boy was taught and fed;
When, say he lives, fair, freckled, lank, and lean,
The lad returns shrewd, subtle, close, and keen;
With all the northern virtues, and the rules
Taught to the thrifty in these thriving schools:
There had he gone, and borne this trying part,
But Richard's mother had a mother's heart.

Now squire and rector were return'd to school,
And spoke of him who there had sovereign rule:
He was, it seem'd, a tyrant of the sort
Who make the cries of tortured boys his sport;
One of a race, if not extinguish'd, tamed—
The flogger now is of the act ashamed;
But this great mind all mercy's calls withstood,
This Holofernes[6] was a man of blood.

[5] [The following is from a letter by one of the Poet's family: "In the idea of one brother relating to another various particulars of his neighbours, I can recall the pleasure and interest which my father himself evidently felt, in our visits to Aldborough, as his sister related to him the proceedings of those whom he had known in his youth—when, after a delightful day of fuci hunting, we all met over a light supper of delicate fish, then planned some amusement for the morrow, and then sank to sleep, within two hundred yards of the breakers, soothed by the deep, hollow roar, now loud and near, then rolling along the shore like distant thunder."]

[6] [See Love's Labour 's Lost, act iv. sc. 2. Dr. Warburton says, "that by Holofernes was designed a particular character, a pedant and a schoolmaster, in Shakspeare's time, one John Florio, a teacher of the Italian language." In 1578 Florio published 'First Fruits, which yielde familiar speech, merrie proverbes, wittie sentences, and golden sayings:' he also translated Montaigne's Essays. He died in 1625.]

" Students," he said, " like horses on the road,
" Must well be lash'd before they take the load;
" They may be willing for a time to run,
" But you must whip them ere the work be done:
" To tell a boy, that, if he will improve,
" His friends will praise him, and his parents love,
" Is doing nothing—he has not a doubt
" But they will love him, nay, applaud, without:
" Let no fond sire a boy's ambition trust
" To make him study—let him see he must."
Such his opinion; and to prove it true,
At least sincere, it was his practice too:
Pluto they call'd him, and they named him well,
'T was not a heaven where he was pleased to dwell:
From him a smile was like the Greenland sun,
Surprising, nay portentous, when it shone;
Or like the lightning, for the sudden flash
Prepared the children for the thunder's crash.

O! had Narcissa, when she fondly kiss'd
The weeping boy whom she to school dismiss'd,
Had she beheld him shrinking from the arm
Uplifted high to do the greater harm,
Then seen her darling stripp'd, and that pure white,
And—O! her soul had fainted at the sight;
And with those looks that love could not withstand,
She would have cried, " Barbarian, hold thy hand!"
In vain! no grief to this stern soul could speak,
No iron tear roll down this Pluto's cheek.

Thus far they went, half earnest, half in jest,
Then turn'd to themes of deeper interest;
While Richard's mind, that for a while had stray'd,
Call'd home its powers, and due attention paid.

BOOK III.

BOYS AT SCHOOL.

The School—Schoolboys—The Boy Tyrant—Sir Hector Blane—Schoolboys in after life how changed—how the same—The patronised Boy, his Life and Death—Reflections—Story of Harry Bland.

We name the world a school,—for day by day
We something learn, till we are call'd away;
The school we name a world,—for vice and pain,
Fraud and contention, there begin to reign;
And much, in fact, this lesser world can show
Of grief and crime that in the greater grow.

" You saw," said George, " in that still-hated school,
" How the meek suffer, how the haughty rule;
" There soft, ingenuous, gentle minds endure
" Ills that ease, time, and friendship fail to cure:
" There the best hearts, and those who shrink from sin,
" Find some seducing imp to draw them in;[1]
" Who takes infernal pleasure to impart
" The strongest poison to the purest heart.

" Call to your mind this scene—Yon boy behold:
" How hot the vengeance of a heart so cold!
" See how he beats, whom he had just reviled
" And made rebellious—that imploring child:
" How fierce his eye, how merciless his blows,
" And how his anger on his insult grows:
" You saw this Hector and his patient slave,
" Th' insulting speech, the cruel blows he gave.[2]

" Mix'd with mankind, his interest in his sight,
" We found this Nimrod civil and polite;
" There was no triumph in his manner seen,
" He was so humble you might think him mean;
" Those angry passions slept till he attain'd
" His purposed wealth, and waked when that was gain'd:
" He then resumed the native wrath and pride,
" The more indulged, as longer laid aside;
" Wife, children, servants, all obedience pay,
" The slaves at school no greater slaves than they.
" No more dependent, he resumes the rein,
" And shows the schoolboy turbulence again.
" Were I a poet, I would say, he brings
" To recollection some impetuous springs:
" See! one that issues from its humble source,
" To gain new powers, and run its noisy course;
" Frothy and fierce among the rocks it goes,
" And threatens all that bound it or oppose:
" Till wider grown, and finding large increase,
" Though bounded still, it moves along in peace;
" And as its waters to the ocean glide,
" They bear a busy people on its tide;
" But there arrived, and from its channel free,
" Those swelling waters meet the mighty sea;
" With threat'ning force the new-form'd billows swell,
" And now affright the crowd they bore so well."

" Yet," said the Rector, " all these early signs
" Of vice are lost, and vice itself declines;
" Religion counsels; troubles—sorrows—rise,
" And the vile spirit in the conflict dies.

[1] [MS.:—
" Oh! there's a wicked little world in schools,
" Where mischief suffers and oppression rules;
" Where mild, quiescent children oft endure
" What a long placid life shall fail to cure:
" Where virtuous boys, who shrink from early sin,
" Meet guilty rogues, who love to draw them in,
" Who take a pleasure at their just surprise,
" Who make them wicked, and proclaim them wise."]

[2] [MS.:—
" Behold him now, without the least pretence
" To such command—behold him five years hence;
" Mix'd in the world, his interest in his sight,
" How smooth he looks, his language how polite!
" No signs of anger, insult, scorn, are seen;
" The address is mild, the temper is serene,
" His fiery passions are resign'd and still,
" They yield to reason, or obey his will;
" But are they dead?—Not so: should he attain
" The wish'd-for fortune, they will live again;
" Then shall the Tyrant be once more obey'd,
" And all be Fags whom he can make afraid."

" Sir *Hector Blanie*, the champion of the school,
" Was very blockhead, but was form'd for rule:
" Learn he could not; he said he could not learn,
" But he profess'd it gave him no concern:
" Books were his horror, dinner his delight,
" And his amusement to shake hands and fight;
" Argue he could not, but in case of doubt,
" Or disputation, fairly box'd it out;
" This was his logic, and, his arm so strong,
" His cause prevail'd, and he was never wrong:
" But so obtuse—you must have seen his look,
" Desponding, angry, puzzled o'er his book.

" Can you not see him on the morn that proved
" His skill in figures? Pluto's self was moved.—
" 'Come, six times five?' th' impatient teacher cried;
" In vain—the pupil shut his eyes, and sigh'd.
" 'Try—six times count your fingers. How he stands!
" 'Your fingers, idiot!'—'What, of both my hands?'

" With parts like these, his father felt assured,
" In busy times a ship might be procured;
" He too was pleased to be so early freed,—
" He now could fight, and he in time might read.
" So he has fought, and in his country's cause
" Has gain'd him glory, and our hearts' applause.
" No more the blustering boy a school defies,
" We see the hero from the tyrant rise,
" And in the captain's worth the student's dulness dies."

" Be all allow'd," replied the Squire; " I give
" Praise to his actions; may their glory live!
" Nay, I will hear him in his riper age
" Fight his good ship, and with the foe engage:
" Nor will I quit him when the cowards fly,
" Although, like them, I dread his energy.

" But still, my friend, that ancient spirit reigns,
" His powers support the credit of his brains,
" Insisting ever that he must be right,
" And for his reasons still prepared to fight.
" Let him a judge of England's prowess be,
" And all her floating terrors on the sea;
" But this contents not, this is not denied,
" He claims a right on all things to decide;
" A kind of patent-wisdom, and he cries,
" 'T is so!' and bold the hero that denies.[3]
" Thus the boy-spirit still the bosom rules,
" And the world's maxims were at first the school's."

" No doubt," said Jacques, " there are in minds the seeds
" Of good and ill, the virtues and the weeds;
" But is it not of study the intent
" This growth of evil nature to prevent?
" To check the progress of each idle shoot
" That might retard the ripening of the fruit?

" Our purpose certain, and we much effect,
" We something cure, and something we correct;
" But do your utmost, when the man you see,
" You find him what you saw the boy would be—
" Disguised a little—but we still behold
" What pleased and what offended us of old.
" Years from the mind no native stain remove,
" But lay the varnish of the world above.
" Still, when he can, he loves to step aside,
" And be the boy without a check or guide;
" In the old wanderings he with pleasure strays,
" And reassumes the bliss of earlier days.

" I left at school the boy with pensive look,
" Whom some great patron order'd to his book,
" Who from his mother's cot reluctant came,
" And gave *my lord* for this compassion fame;
" Who, told of all his patron's merit, sigh'd,
" I know not why, in sorrow or in pride;
" And would, with vex'd and troubled spirit, cry,
" 'I am not happy; let your envy die.'
" Him left I with you; who, perhaps, can tell
" If Fortune bless'd him, or what fate befell.
" I yet remember how the idlers ran
" To see the carriage of the godlike man,
" When pride restrain'd me; yet I thought the deed
" Was noble, too,——and how did it succeed?"

Jacques answer'd not till he had backward cast
His view, and dwelt upon the evil past;
Then, as he sigh'd, he smiled;—from folly rise
Such smiles, and misery will create such sighs.
And Richard now from his abstraction broke,
Listening attentive as the Rector spoke.

" This noble Lord was one disposed to try
" And weigh the worth of each new luxury;
" Now, at a certain time, in pleasant mood,
" He tried the luxury of doing good;
" For this he chose a widow's handsome boy,[4]
" Whom he would first improve, and then employ.

[3] [MS.—V. R.:—
" But when he sits in judgment, and decrees
" What men should rule us, and what books should please,
" And thus the merit of a critic gains,
" Only for blowing out a Frenchman's brains,
" I must demur, and in my mind retrace
" The accountant Hector and his rueful face:
" But on he blunders! thinking he is wise
" Who has much strength, no matter where it lies."]

[4] [In the character and melancholy death of Charles, the patronised boy, Mr. Crabbe has described the fate of his brother-in-law, Mr. James Elmy, who died at an early age, a few years after his sister's marriage, but not until he had experienced much suffering. Having a strong predilection for the pencil, he was placed, by the assistance of his uncle, Mr. Tovell, under the tuition of the Royal Academician, Cosway; but, unfortunately, he had more passion than genius, and painted respectably, but nothing more. Returning to reside with his mother at Beccles, great expectations of his success were formed by all his friends. Unhappily, he failed in his first attempt—a view of Beccles—and never overcame the bitter mortification. His health, always delicate, began about this time to decline. Not having strength or spirits for renewed exertion, he confined himself to his room, and would scarcely eat enough to support life, because he could not maintain himself, and would not be a burden to his widowed mother. At length, he pined away, a victim to disappointment and melancholy; and the last effort of his sinking strength was to commit all his drawings to the flames.]

" The boy was gentle, modest, civil, kind,
" But not for bustling through the world design'd;
" Reserved in manner, with a little gloom,
" Apt to retire, but never to assume;
" Possess'd of pride that he could not subdue,
" Although he kept his origin in view.
" Him sent my Lord to school, and this became
" A theme for praise, and gave his Lordship fame:
" But when the boy was told how great his debt,
" He proudly ask'd, 'Is it contracted yet?'
" With care he studied, and with some success;
" His patience great, but his acquirements less:
" Yet when he heard that Charles would not excel,
" His Lordship answer'd, with a smile, 'T is well;
" 'Let him proceed and do the best he can;
" 'I want no pedant, but a useful man.'

" The speech was heard, and praise was amply dealt;
" His Lordship felt it, and he said he felt:
" 'It is delightful,' he observed, 'to raise
" 'And foster merit,—it is more than praise.'

" Five years at school th' industrious boy had pass'd,
" 'And what,' was whisper'd, 'will be done at last?'
" My Lord was troubled, for he did not mean
" To have his bounty watch'd and overseen—
" Bounty that sleeps when men applaud no more
" The generous act that waked their praise before;
" The deed was pleasant while the praise was new,
" But none the progress would with wonder view:
" It was a debt contracted; he who pays
" A debt is just, but must not look for praise:
" The deed that once had fame must still proceed,
" Though Fame no more proclaims 'How great the deed!'
" The boy is taken from his mother's side,
" And he who took him must be now his guide:
" But this, alas! instead of bringing fame,
" A tax, a trouble, to my Lord became.

" 'The boy is dull, you say,—why, then by trade,
" 'By law, by physic, nothing can be made;
" 'If a small living—mine are both too large;
" 'And then the College is a cursed charge:
" 'The sea is open; should he there display
" 'Signs of dislike, he cannot run away.'

" Now Charles, who acted no heroic part,
" And felt no seaman's glory warm his heart,

" Refused the offer—anger touch'd my Lord.—
" 'He does not like it—Good, upon my word!
" 'If I at college place him, he will need
" 'Supplies for ever, and will not succeed;
" 'Doubtless in *me* 'tis duty to provide
" 'Not for his comfort only, but his pride!
" 'Let him to sea!'—He heard the words again,
" With promise join'd—with threat'ning; all in vain:
" Charles had his own pursuits; for aid to these
" He had been thankful, and had tried to please:
" But urged again, as meekly as a saint
" He humbly begg'd to stay at home and paint.[5]
" 'Yes, pay some dauber, that this stubborn fool
" 'May grind his colours, and may boast his school.'

" As both persisted, 'Choose, good sir, your way,'
" The peer exclaim'd, 'I have no more to say;
" 'I seek your good, but I have no command
" 'Upon your will, nor your desire withstand.'

" Resolved and firm, yet dreading to offend,
" Charles pleaded *genius* with his noble friend:
" 'Genius!' he cried, 'the name that triflers give
" 'To their strong wishes without pains to live;
" 'Genius! the plea of all who feel desire
" 'Of fame, yet grudge the labours that acquire:
" 'But say 't is true; how poor, how late the gain,
" 'And certain ruin if the hope be vain!'
" Then to the world appeal'd my Lord, and cried,
" 'Whatever happens, I am justified.'
" Nay, it was trouble to his soul to find
" There was such hardness in the human mind:[6]
" He wash'd his hands before the world, and swore
" That he such minds would patronise no more.

" Now Charles his bread by daily labours sought,
" And this his solace, 'So Correggio wrought.'
" Alas! poor youth! however great his name,
" And humble thine, thy fortune was the same:
" Charles drew and painted, and some praise obtain'd
" For care and pains; but little more was gain'd:
" Fame was his hope, and he contempt display'd
" For approbation, when 't was coolly paid:
" His daily tasks he call'd a waste of mind,
" Vex'd at his fate, and angry with mankind:
" 'Thus have the blind to merit ever done,
" And Genius mourn'd for each neglected son.'[7]

" Charles murmur'd thus, and, angry and alone,
" Half breath'd the curse, and half suppress'd the groan;

5 [MS.:—
" Again was made the offer, and again,
" With threats, with noble promises in vain.
" When my Lord saw that nothing could be done,
" He nobly cried, 'I'll fit him as my son:
" 'Sir, will you go?' As meekly as a saint,
" Charles humbly begg'd to stay on land and paint."]

6 [MS.:—
" Stubborn though mild, and fearing to offend,
" He gain'd his freedom, and he lost his friend:
" My Lord appeal'd to all the world, and cried,
" 'There never breathed such stubbornness and pride;
" 'Do what you please, sir, I am justified.'
" So said my Lord; for 'he was grieved to find
" 'Such vile ingratitude in base mankind,'"]

7 [MS.:—
" The boy then wrote for bread. I saw him thrice;
" His passions placid, he without a vice;
" He sometimes painted, but was uninspired
" By genius, unprotected, unadmired;
" But pensive, sober, diligent, employ'd
" His every hour, his life without a void,
" He sought for little, nothing he enjoy'd.
" I fear he thought himself, because distress'd,
" An injured genius, by the world oppress'd."]

" Then still more sullen grew, and still more proud,
" Fame so refused he to himself allow'd,
" Crowds in contempt he held, and all to him was crowd.

" If aught on earth, the youth his mother loved,
" And at her death to distant scenes removed.

" Years pass'd away, and where he lived, and how,
" Was then unknown—indeed we know not now;
" But once at twilight walking up and down,
" In a poor alley of the mighty town,
" Where, in her narrow courts and garrets, hide
" The grieving sons of Genius, Want, and Pride,
" I met him musing: sadness I could trace,
" And conquer'd hope's meek anguish in his face.
" See him I must; but I with ease address'd,
" And neither pity nor surprise express'd;
" I strove both grief and pleasure to restrain,
" But yet I saw that I was giving pain.
" He said, with quick'ning pace, as loth to hold
" A longer converse, that 'the day was cold,
" 'That he was well, that I had scarcely light
" 'To aid my steps,' and bade me then good night!

" I saw him next where he had lately come,
" A silent pauper in a crowded room;
" I heard his name, but he conceal'd his face,—
" To his sad mind his misery was disgrace:
" In vain I strove to combat his disdain
" Of my compassion——'Sir, I pray refrain;'
" For I had left my friends, and stepp'd aside,
" Because I fear'd his unrelenting pride.[8]

" He then was sitting on a workhouse-bed,
" And on the naked boards reclined his head,
" Around were children with incessant cry,
" And near was one, like him, about to die:
" A broken chair's deal bottom held the store
" That he required—he soon would need no more;
" A yellow tea-pot, standing at his side,
" From its half spout the cold black tea supplied.

" Hither, it seem'd, the fainting man was brought,
" Found without food,—it was no longer sought;
" For his employers knew not whom they paid,
" Nor where to seek him whom they wish'd to aid:
" Here brought, some kind attendant he address'd,
" And sought some trifles which he yet possess'd;
" Then named a lightless closet, in a room
" Hired at small rate, a garret's deepest gloom:
" They sought the region, and they brought him all
" That he his own, his proper wealth, could call:
" A better coat, less pieced; some linen neat,
" Not whole; and papers, many a valued sheet;
" Designs and drawings: these, at his desire,
" Were placed before him at the chamber fire,
" And, while th' admiring people stood to gaze,
" He, one by one, committed to the blaze,
" Smiling in spleen; but one he held a while,
" And gave it to the flames, and could not smile.

" The sickening man—for such appear'd the fact—
" Just in his need, would not a debt contract;
" But left his poor apartment for the bed
" That earth might yield him, or some way-side shed;
" Here he was found, and to this place convey'd,
" Where he might rest, and his last debt be paid:
" Fame was his wish, but he so far from fame,
" That no one knew his kindred or his name,
" Or by what means he lived, or from what place he came.

" Poor Charles! unnoticed by thy titled friend,[9]
" Thy days had calmy pass'd, in peace thine end:
" Led by thy patron's vanity astray,
" Thy own misled thee in thy trackless way,
" Urging thee on by hope absurd and vain,
" Where never peace or comfort smiled again!
" Once more I saw him, when his spirits fail'd,
" And my desire to aid him then prevail'd;
" He show'd a softer feeling in his eye,
" And watch'd my looks, and own'd the sympathy:
" 'T was now the calm of wearied pride; so long
" As he had strength was his resentment strong,
" But in such place, with strangers all around,
" And they such strangers, to have something found
" Allied to his own heart, an early friend,
" One, only one, who would on him attend,
" To give and take a look! at this his journey's end;
" One link, however slender, of the chain
" That held him where he could not long remain;
" The one sole interest! No, he could not now
" Retain his anger; Nature knew not how;
" And so there came a softness to his mind,
" And he forgave the usage of mankind;
" His cold long fingers now were press'd to mine,
" And his faint smile of kinder thoughts gave sign;
" His lips moved often as he tried to lend
" His words their sound, and softly whisper'd 'Friend!'
" Not without comfort in the thought express'd
" By that calm look with which he sank to rest."

" The man," said George, " you see, through life retain'd
" The boy's defects; his virtues too remain'd.

" But where are now those minds so light and gay,
" So forc'd on study, so intent on play,
" Swept, by the world's rude blasts, from hope's dear views away?
" Some grieved for long neglect in earlier times,
" Some sad from frailties, some lamenting crimes;

[8] [MS.:—
" Years pass'd away—I think some twenty-five;
" Again I saw him, and but just alive,
" And still forbidding, silent, sullen, proud,
" As one whose claims were just, and not allow'd.
" He saw me, saw my sympathy with pain,
" Received my humble offers with disdain,
" And sternly told me 'not to come again.'
" He then was sitting," &c.]

[9] [MS.:—
" Thou, Charles! unaided by a noble friend,
" Hadst spent a careful life as others spend;
" But when thy patron's vanity and thine
" Were made by cruel fortune to combine,
" 'T was then th' unhappy wretch was lifted high
" On golden stilts, and seem'd to touch the sky;
" But when the tempter-hand withdraws the props,
" The vision closes, and the victim drops."]

" Thinking, with sorrow, on the season lent
" For noble purpose, and in trifling spent;
" And now, at last, when they in earnest view
" The nothings done—what work they find to do!
" Where is that virtue that the generous boy
" Felt, and resolved that nothing should destroy?
" He who with noble indignation glow'd
" When vice had triumph! who his tear bestow'd
" On injured merit! he who would possess
" Power but to aid the children of distress!
" Who has such joy in generous actions shown,
" And so sincere, they might be call'd his own—
" Knight, hero, patriot, martyr! on whose tongue,
" And potent arm, a nation's welfare hung!
" He who to public misery brought relief,
" And sooth'd the anguish of domestic grief!
" Where now this virtue's fervour, spirit, zeal?
" Who felt so warmly, has he ceased to feel?
" The boy's emotions of that noble kind,
" Ah! sure the experienced man has not resign'd;
" Or are these feelings varied? has the knight,
" Virtue's own champion, now refused to fight?
" Is the deliverer turn'd th' oppressor now?
" Has the reformer dropp'd the dangerous vow?
" Or has the patriot's bosom lost its heat,
" And forced him, shivering, to a snug retreat?
" Is such the grievous lapse of human pride?
" Is such the victory of the worth untried?

" Here will I pause, and then review the shame
" Of *Harry Bland* to hear his parent's name;[10]
" That mild, that modest boy, whom well we knew
" In him long time the secret sorrow grew;
" He wept alone; then to his friend confess'd
" The grievous fears that his pure mind oppress'd;
" And thus, when terror o'er his shame obtain'd
" A painful conquest, he his case explain'd:
" And first his favourite question'd—' Willie, tell,
" ' Do all the wicked people go to Hell?'

" Willie with caution answer'd, ' Yes, they do,
" ' Or else repent; but what is this to you?'
" ' O! yes, dear friend:' he then his tale began—
" He fear'd his father was a wicked man,
" Nor had repented of his naughty life;
" The wife he had indeed was not a wife,
" ' Not as my mother was; the servants all
" ' Call her a name—I 'll whisper what they call.
" ' She saw me weep, and ask'd, in high disdain,
" ' If tears could bring my mother back again?
" ' This I could bear, but not when she pretends
" ' Such fond regard, and what I speak commends;
" ' Talks of my learning, fawning wretch! and tries
" ' To make me love her,—love! when I despise.
" ' Indeed I had it in my heart to say
" ' Words of reproach before I came away:
" ' And then my father's look is not the same;
" ' He puts his anger on to hide his shame.'

" With all these feelings delicate and nice,
" This dread of infamy, this scorn of vice,
" He left the school, accepting, though with pride,
" His father's aid—but there would not reside;
" He married then a lovely maid, approved
" Of every heart as worthy to be loved;
" Mild as the morn in summer, firm as truth,
" And graced with wisdom in the bloom of youth.

" How is it, men, when they in judgment sit
" On the same fault, now censure, now acquit?
" Is it not thus, that *here* we view the sin,
" And *there* the powerful cause that drew us in?
" 'T is not that men are to the evil blind,
" But that a different object fills the mind.
" In judging others we can see too well
" Their grievous fall, but not how grieved they fell;
" Judging ourselves, we to our minds recall,
" Not how we fell, but how we grieved to fall;
" Or could this man, so vex'd in early time
" By this strong feeling for his father's crime,—
" Who to the parent's sin was barely just,
" And mix'd with filial fear the man's disgust,—
" Could he, without some strong delusion, quit
" The path of duty, and to shame submit?
" Cast off the virtue he so highly prized,
" And be the very creature he despised?

" A tenant's wife, half forward, half afraid,
" Features, it seem'd, of powerful cast display'd,
" That bore down faith and duty; common fame
" Speaks of a contract that augments the shame.

" There goes he, not unseen, so strong the will,
" And blind the wish, that bear him to the mill;
" There he degraded sits, and strives to please
" The miller's children, laughing at his knees;
" And little Dorcas, now familiar grown,
" Talks of her rich papa, and of her own.
" He woos the mother's now precarious smile
" By costly gifts, that tempers reconcile;
" While the rough husband, yielding to the pay
" That buys his absence, growling stalks away.
" 'Tis said the offending man will sometimes sigh,
" And say, ' My God, in what a dream am I!
" ' I will awake:' but, as the day proceeds,
" The weaken'd mind the day's indulgence needs;
" Hating himself at every step he takes,
" His mind approves the virtue he forsakes,
" And yet forsakes her. O! how sharp the pain,
" Our vice, ourselves, our habits to disdain;
" To go where never yet in peace we went,
" To feel our hearts can bleed, yet not relent;
" To sigh, yet not recede; to grieve, yet not repent!"

[10] [MS.:—
" The boy was tall, but with a mincing air,
" Blue, languid eyes, pale cheek, and flaxen hair;
" His temper fretful, but his spirits mild,
" Loved by mamma, by all her maidens styled
" The wittiest darling and the sweetest child.
" In those dear times, when that mamma had rule,
" There was much play, few lessons, and no school;
" But, *oh!* *misfortune*—when the lady died,
" No second wife her honour'd place supplied,
" But one dishonour'd; and she quickly sent
" All who had grief to grieve in banishment;
" No longer now was there the rush of joy,
" The flood of fondness, o'er the happy boy;
" No more indulgence by the maidens shown
" For master's pleasure, purchase of their own:
" But they as spies were to new service sent,
" And the sad boy to school and banishment.
" He wept alone," &c.]

BOOK IV.

ADVENTURES OF RICHARD.

Meeting of the Brothers in the Morning—Pictures, Music, Books—The Autumnal Walk—The Farm—The Flock—Effect of Retirement upon the Mind—Dinner—Richard's Adventure at Sea—George inquires into the Education of his Brother—Richard's Account of his Occupations in his early Life; his Pursuits, Associations, Partialities, Affections, and Feelings—His Love of Freedom—The Society he chose—The Friendships he engaged in, and the Habits he contracted.

EIGHT days had pass'd: the Brothers now could meet
With ease, and take the customary seat.

"These," said the host, for he perceived where stray'd
His brother's eye, and what he now survey'd,—
"These are the costly trifles that we buy,
"Urged by the strong demands of vanity,
"The thirst and hunger of a mind diseased,
"That must with purchased flattery be appeased;
"But yet, 'tis true, the things that you behold
"Serve to amuse us as we 're getting old: [1]
"These pictures, as I heard our artists say,
"Are genuine all, and I believe they may;
"They cost the genuine sums, and I should grieve
"If, being willing, I could not believe.
"And there is music; when the ladies come,
"With their keen looks they scrutinize the room
"To see what pleases, and I must expect
"To yield them pleasure, or to find neglect:
"For, as attractions from our person fly,
"Our purses, Richard, must the want supply;
"Yet would it vex me could the triflers know
"That they can shut out comfort or bestow.[2]

"But see this room: here, Richard, you will find
"Books for all palates, food for every mind;
"This readers term the ever-new delight,
"And so it is, if minds have appetite:
"Mine once was craving; great my joy, indeed,
"Had I possess'd such food when I could feed;
"When at the call of every new-born wish
"I could have keenly relish'd every dish:
"Now, Richard, now I stalk around and look
"Upon the dress and title of a book,
"Try half a page, and then can taste no more,
"But the dull volume to its place restore;
"Begin a second slowly to peruse,
"Then cast it by, and look about for news;
"The news itself grows dull in long debates,—
"I skip, and see what the conclusion states;
"And many a speech, with zeal and study made
"Cold and resisting spirits to persuade,
"Is lost on mine; alone, we cease to feel
"What crowds admire, and wonder at their zeal.

"But how the day? No fairer will it be?
"Walk you? Alas! 'tis requisite for me—
"Nay, let me not prescribe—my friends and guests are free."

It was a fair and mild autumnal sky,
And earth's ripe treasures met th' admiring eye,
As a rich beauty, when her bloom is lost,
Appears with more magnificence and cost:
The wet and heavy grass, where feet had stray'd,
Not yet erect, the wanderer's way betray'd;
Showers of the night had swell'd the deep'ning rill,
The morning breeze had urged the quick'ning mill;
Assembled rooks had wing'd their seaward flight,
By the same passage to return at night,
While proudly o'er them hung the steady kite,
Then turn'd him back, and left the noisy throng,
Nor deign'd to know them as he sail'd along.
Long yellow leaves, from oziers, strew'd around,
Choked the small stream, and hush'd the feeble sound;
While the dead foliage dropp'd from loftier trees,
Our Squire beheld not with his wonted ease;
But to his own reflections made reply,
And said aloud, "Yes! doubtless we must die."

"We must," said Richard; "and we would not live
"To feel what dotage and decay will give;
"But we yet taste whatever we behold,
"The morn is lovely, though the air is cold:
"There is delicious quiet in this scene,
"At once so rich, so varied, so serene;
"Sounds too delight us,—each discordant tone
"Thus mingled please, that fail to please alone;
"This hollow wind, this rustling of the brook,
"The farm-yard noise, the woodman at yon oak—
"See, the axe falls!—now listen to the stroke!
"That gun itself, that murders all this peace,
"Adds to the charm, because it soon must cease." [3]

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[1] [Orig. MS.:—
"Brother," said George, "When I beheld you last,
"The time how distant!—Well! the time is past—
"I had not then these comforts you behold,
"Things that amuse us when we 're getting old:
"These pictures now, experienced men will say
"They 're genuine all, and so perhaps they may;
"They cost the money, that I 'm sure is true,
"And therefore, Richard, I will say it too."]

[2] [MS.:—
"Music you find; for hither ladies come;
"They make infernal uproar in the room.
"I bear it. Why? because I must expect
"To pay for honour, and I fear neglect.
"And if attraction from your person flies,
"You must some pleasure from your purse devise;
"But this apart—the triflers should not know
"That they can comfort or regret bestow."]

[3] [MS.:—
"That gun itself, that breaks upon the ear,
"Has something suited to the dying year;"
"The dying partridge!" cried, with much disdain,
Th' offended 'Squire—"Our laws are made in vain:
"The country, Richard, would not be amiss,
"But for these plagues, and villanies like this:
"Wealth breeds the curse that fixes on the land,
"And strife and heritage go hand in hand."]

" No doubt," said George, " the country has its charms.
" My farm behold! the model for all farms!
" Look at that land—you find not there a weed;
" We grub the roots, and suffer none to seed.
" To land like this no botanist will come,
" To seek the precious ware he hides at home;
" Pressing the leaves and flowers with effort nice,
" As if they came from herbs in Paradise:
" Let them their favourites with my neighbours see;
" They have no—what?—no *habitat* with me.[4]

" Now see my flock, and hear its glory;—none
" Have that vast body and that slender bone;
" They are the village boast, the dealer's theme;
" Fleece of such staple! flesh in such esteem!"[5]

" Brother," said Richard, " do I hear aright?
" Does the land truly give so much delight?"

" So says my bailiff: sometimes I have tried
" To catch the joy, but nature has denied;
" It will not be—the mind has had a store
" Laid up for life, and will admit no more:
" Worn out in trials, and about to die,
" In vain to these we for amusement fly;
" We farm, we garden, we our poor employ,
" And much command, though little we enjoy;
" Or, if ambitious, we employ our pen,
" We plant a desert, or we drain a fen;
" And here, behold my medal!—this will show
" What men may merit when they nothing know."

" Yet reason here," said Richard, " joins with pride."
" I did not ask th' alliance," George replied—
" I grant it true, such trifles may induce
" A dull, proud man to wake and be of use;
" And, there are purer pleasures, that a mind
" Calm and uninjured may in villas find;
" But where th' affections have been deeply tried,
" With other food that mind must be supplied:
" 'T is not in trees or medals to impart
" The powerful medicine for an aching heart;
" The agitation dies, but there is still
" The backward spirit, the resisting will.
" Man takes his body to a country-seat,
" But minds, dear Richard, have their own re-treat;
" Oft when the feet are pacing o'er the green
" The mind is gone where never grass was seen,
" And never thinks of hill, or vale, or plain,
" Till want of rest creates a sense of pain
" That calls that wandering mind, and brings it home again.
" No more of farms:—but here I boast of minds
" That make a friend the richer when he finds;
" These shalt thou see;—but, Richard, be it known,
" Who thinks to see, must in his turn be shown.
" But now farewell! to thee will I resign
" Woods, walks, and valleys! take them till we dine."

The Brothers dined, and with that plenteous fare
That seldom fails to dissipate our care,
At least the lighter kind; and oft prevails
When reason, duty, nay, when kindness fails.
Yet food and wine, and all that mortals bless,
Lead them to think of peril and distress;
Cold, hunger, danger, solitude, and pain,
That men in life's adventurous ways sustain.

" Thou hast sail'd far, dear Brother," said the Squire—
" Permit me of these unknown lands t' inquire,
" Lands never till'd, where thou hast wondering been,
" And all the marvels thou hast heard and seen:
" Do tell me something of the miseries felt
" In climes where travellers freeze, and where they melt;
" And be not nice,—we know 't is not in men,
" Who travel far, to hold a steady pen:
" Some will, 't is true, a bolder freedom take,
" And keep our wonder always wide awake;

[4] [In botanical language, the "*habitat*" is the favourite soil or situation of the more scarce species of plants.]

[5] [The original draft, in place of the following lines, runs—

They walk'd along through mead and shaded wood,
And stubble-ground, where late abundance stood,
And in the vale, where winter waters glide,
O'er pastures stretching up the mountain side.

With a shrewd smile, but mix'd with look severe,
The landlord view'd the promise of the year.
" See! that unrivall'd flock! they, they alone
" Have the vast body on the slender bone;
" They are the village boast, the country's theme;
" Fleece of such staple! flesh in such esteem!"

Richard gave praise, but not in rapturous sty'e;
He chose his words, and spoke them with a smile:
" Brother," said he, " and if I take you right,
" I am full glad—these things are your delight;
" I see you proud, but,"—speaking half aside—
" Is, now, the pleasure equal to the pride?"

A transient flush on George's face appear'd,
Cloudy he look'd, and then his looks were clear'd:

" Look at yon hind!" said he,—" in very deed,
" His is the pride and pleasure in the breed;
" He has delight, he judges—I the name,
" And the whole praise—I speak it to my shame.
" Oh! Richard, Richard, tell me, if you can,
" What will engage and fix the mind of man?"

" Suppose," said he, " we look about the green;
" In yonder cots some objects may be seen,
" T' excite our pity, or relieve our spleen."

" Oh! they are thieves and blockheads," George replied,
" Unjust, ungrateful, and unsatisfied;
" To grasp at all, their study, thought, and care,
" All would be thieves and plunderers, if they dare;
" His envious nature not a clown conceals,
" But bluntly shows the insolence he feels."

" And whence," said Richard, " should the vice proceed,
" But from their want of knowledge, and their need?
" Let them know more, or let them better feel,
" And I 'll engage they 'll neither threat nor steal."

" Brother," said George, " your pity makes you blind
" To all that 's vile and odious in mankind;
" 'T is true your notions may appear divine,
" But for their justice——Let us go and dine."]

" We know of those whose dangers far exceed
" Our frail belief, that trembles as we read;
" Such as in deserts burn, and thirst, and die,
" Save a last gasp that they recover by:
" Then, too, their hazard from a tyrant's arms,
" A tiger's fury, or a lady's charms;
" Beside th' accumulated evils borne
" From the bold outset to the safe return.
" Those men abuse; but thou hast fair pretence
" To modest dealing, and to mild good sense;
" Then let me hear thy struggles and escapes
" In the far lands of crocodiles and apes:
" Say, hast thou, Bruce-like, knelt upon the bed
" Where the young Nile uplifts his branchy head?
" Or been partaker of th' unhallow'd feast,
" Where beast-like man devours his fellow-beast,
" And churn'd the bleeding life? while each great dame
" And sovereign beauty bade adieu to shame?
" Or did the storm, that thy wreck'd pinnace bore,
" Impel thee gasping on some unknown shore;
" Where, when thy beard and nails were savage grown,
" Some swarthy princess took thee for her own,
" Some danger-dreading Yarico, who, kind,
" Sent thee away, and, prudent, stay'd behind?

" Come—I am ready wonders to receive,
" Prone to assent, and willing to believe."

Richard replied: " It must be known to you,
" That tales improbable may yet be true;
" And yet it is a foolish thing to tell
" A tale that shall be judged improbable;
" While some impossibilities appear
" So like the truth, that we assenting hear:
" Yet, with your leave, I venture to relate
" A chance-affair, and fact alone will state;
" Though, I confess, it may suspicion breed,
" And you may cry, 'Improbable, indeed!'

" When first I tried the sea, I took a trip,
" But duty none, in a relation's ship;
" Thus, unengaged, I felt my spirits light,
" Kept care at distance, and put fear to flight;
" Oft this same spirit in my friends prevail'd,
" Buoyant in dangers, rising when assail'd;
" When, as the gale at evening died away,—
" And die it will with the retiring day,—
" Impatient then, and sick of very ease,
" We loudly whistled for the slumbering breeze.

" One eve it came; and, frantic in my joy,
" I rose and danced, as idle as a boy:
" The cabin-lights were down, that we might learn
" A trifling something from the ship astern;
" The stiffening gale bore up the growing wave,
" And wilder motion to my madness gave:
" Oft have I since, when thoughtful and at rest,
" Believed some maddening power my mind possess'd;
" For, in an instant, as the stern sank low,
" (How moved I knew not—What can madness know?)
" Chance that direction to my motion gave,
" And plunged me headlong in the roaring wave:
" Swift flew the parting ship,—the fainter light
" Withdrew,—or horror took them from my sight.

" All was confused above, beneath, around;
" All sounds of terror; no distinguish'd sound
" Could reach me, now on sweeping surges toss'd,
" And then between the rising billows lost;
" An undefined sensation stopp'd my breath;
" Disorder'd views and threat'ning signs of death
" Met in one moment, and a terror gave—
" I cannot paint it—to the moving grave.
" My thoughts were all distressing, hurried, mix'd,
" On all things fixing, not a moment fix'd:
" Vague thoughts of instant danger brought their pain,
" New hopes of safety banish'd them again;
" Then the swoln billow all these hopes destroy'd,
" And left me sinking in the mighty void:
" Weaker I grew, and grew the more dismay'd,
" Of aid all hopeless, yet in search of aid;
" Struggling awhile upon the wave to keep,
" Then, languid, sinking in the yawning deep:
" So toss'd, so lost, so sinking in despair,
" I pray'd in heart an indirected prayer,
" And then once more I gave my eyes to view
" The ship now lost, and bade the light adieu!
" From my chill'd frame the enfeebled spirit fled,
" Rose the tall billows round my deep'ning bed,
" Cold seized my heart, thought ceased, and I was dead.

" Brother, I have not,—man has not the power
" To paint the horrors of that life-long hour;
" Hour!—but of time I knew not—when I found
" Hope, youth, life, love, and all they promised, drown'd;
" When all so indistinct, so undefined,
" So dark and dreadful overcame the mind;
" When such confusion on the spirit dwelt,
" That, feeling much, it knew not what it felt.[6]

" Can I, my Brother, ought I to forget
" That night of terror? No! it threatens yet.
" Shall I days, months—nay, years, indeed, neglect,
" Who then could feel what moments must effect,
" Were aught effected? who, in that wild storm,
" Found there was nothing I could well perform;
" For what to us are moments, what are hours,
" If lost our judgment, and confused our powers?

" Oft in the times when passion strives to reign,
" When duty feebly holds the slacken'd chain,
" When reason slumbers, then remembrance draws
" This view of death, and folly makes a pause—
" The view o'ercomes the vice, the fear the frenzy awes.
" I know there wants not this to make it true,
" What danger bids be done, in safety do;
" Yet such escapes may make our purpose sure.—
" Who slights such warning may be too secure."

" But the escape!"—" Whate'er they judged might save
" Their sinking friend they cast upon the wave;

[6] [See *ante*, p. 11.]

" Something of these my heaven-directed arm
" Unconscious seized, and held as by a charm;
" The crew astern beheld me as I swam,
" And I am saved—O! let me say I am."

" Brother," said George, " I have neglected long
" To think of all thy perils:—it was wrong;
" But do forgive me; for I could not be
" Than of myself more negligent of thee.
" Now tell me, Richard, from the boyish years
" Of thy young mind, that now so rich appears,
" How was it stored? 't was told me thou wert wild,
" A truant urchin,—a neglected child.
" I heard of this escape, and sat supine
" Amid the danger that exceeded thine;
" Thou couldst but die—the waves could but infold
" Thy warm gay heart, and make that bosom cold—
" While I——but no! Proceed, and give me truth;
" How pass'd the years of thy unguided youth?
" Thy father left thee to the care of one
" Who could not teach, could ill support a son;
" Yet time and trouble feeble minds have stay'd,
" And fit for long-neglected duties made:
" I see thee struggling in the world, as late
" Within the waves, and with an equal fate,
" By Heaven preserved—but tell me whence and how
" Thy gleaning came?—a dexterous gleaner thou!"

" Left by that father, who was known to few,
" And to that mother, who has not her due
" Of honest fame," said Richard, " our retreat
" Was a small cottage, for our station meet,
" On Barford Downs: that mother, fond and poor,
" There taught some truths, and bade me seek for more,
" Such as our village-school and books a few
" Supplied; but such I cared not to pursue;
" I sought the town, and to the ocean gave
" My mind and thoughts, as restless as the wave:
" Where crowds assembled I was sure to run,
" Heard what was said, and mused on what was done;
" Attentive listening in the moving scene,
" And often wondering what the men could mean.
" When ships at sea made signals of their need,
" I watch'd on shore the sailors and their speed:
" Mix'd in their act, nor rested till I knew
" Why they were call'd and what they were to do.

" Whatever business in the port was done,
" I, without call, was with the busy one;
" Not daring question, but with open ear
" And greedy spirit ever bent to hear.

" To me the wives of seamen loved to tell
" What storms endanger'd men esteem'd so well;
" What wond'rous things in foreign parts they saw,
" Lands without bounds, and people without law.
" No ships were wreck'd upon that fatal beach,
" But I could give the luckless tale of each;
" Eager I look'd till I beheld a face
" Of one disposed to paint their dismal case;
" Who gave the sad survivors' doleful tale,
" From the first brushing of the mighty gale
" Until they struck; and, suffering in their fate,
" I long'd the more they should its horrors state;
" While some, the fond of pity, would enjoy
" The earnest sorrows of the feeling boy.

" I sought the men return'd from regions cold,
" The frozen straits, where icy mountains roll'd;
" Some I could win to tell me serious tales
" Of boats uplifted by enormous whales,
" Or, when harpoon'd, how swiftly through the sea
" The wounded monsters with the cordage flee;
" Yet some uneasy thoughts assail'd me then,
" The monsters warr'd not with nor wounded men:
" The smaller fry we take, with scales and fins,
" Who gasp and die—this adds not to our sins;
" But so much blood! warm life, and frames so large
" To strike, to murder!—seem'd a heavy charge.

" They told of days where many goes to one—
" Such days as ours; and how a larger sun,
" Red, but not flaming, roll'd, with motion slow,
" On the world's edge, but never dropp'd below.
" There were fond girls who took me to their side
" To tell the story how their lovers died;
" They praised my tender heart, and bade me prove
" Both kind and constant when I came to love.
" In fact I lived for many an idle year
" In fond pursuit of agitations dear;
" For ever seeking, ever pleased to find,
" The food I loved, I thought not of its kind;
" It gave affliction while it brought delight,
" And joy and anguish could at once excite.

" One gusty day, now stormy and now still,
" I stood apart upon the western hill,
" And saw a race at sea: a gun was heard,
" And two contending boats in sail appear'd:
" Equal awhile; then one was left behind,
" And for a moment had her chance resign'd,
" When, in that moment, up a sail they drew—
" Not used before—their rivals to pursue.
" Strong was the gale! in hurry now there came
" Men from the town—their thoughts, their fears the same;
" And women too! affrighted maids and wives,
" All deeply feeling for their sailors' lives.
" The strife continued; in a glass we saw
" The desperate efforts, and we stood in awe,
" When the last boat shot suddenly before,
" Then fill'd and sank—and could be seen no more!

" Then were those piercing shrieks, that frantic flight,
" All hurried! all in tumult and affright!
" A gathering crowd from different streets drew near,
" All ask, all answer—none attend, none hear!

" One boat is safe; and see! she backs her sail
" To save the sinking.—Will her care avail?

" O! how impatient on the sands we tread,
" And the winds roaring, and the women led,
" As up and down they pace with frantic air,
" And scorn a comforter, and will despair;
" They know not who in either boat is gone,
" But think the father, husband, lover, one.

" And who is she apart? She dares not come
" To join the crowd, yet cannot rest at home:
" With what strong interest looks she at the waves,
" Meeting and clashing o'er the seamen's graves!
" 'T is a poor girl betroth'd—a few hours more,
" And *he* will lie a corpse upon the shore.
" Strange, that a boy could love these scenes, and cry
" In very pity—but that boy was I.
" With pain my mother would my tales receive,
" And say, 'My Richard, do not learn to grieve.'
" One wretched hour had pass'd before we knew
" Whom they had saved! Alas! they were, but two,
" An orphan'd lad and widow'd man—no more!
" And they unnoticed stood upon the shore,
" With scarce a friend to greet them—widows view'd
" This man and boy, and then their cries re-new'd:
" 'T was long before the signs of woe gave place
" To joy again; grief sat on every face.

" Sure of my mother's kindness, and the joy
" She felt in meeting her rebellious boy,
" I at my pleasure our new seat forsook,
" And, undirected, these excursions took:
" I often rambled to the noisy quay,
" Strange sounds to hear, and business strange to me;
" Seamen and carmen, and I know not who,
" A lewd, amphibious, rude, contentious crew—
" Confused as bees appear about their hive,
" Yet all alert to keep their work alive.

" Here, unobserved as weed upon the wave,
" My whole attention to the scene I gave;
" I saw their tasks, their toil, their care, their skill,
" Led by their own and by a master-will;
" And though contending, toiling, tugging on,
" The purposed business of the day was done.

" The open shops of craftsmen caught my eye,
" And there my questions met the kind reply:
" Men, when alone, will teach; but, in a crowd,
" The child is silent, or the man is proud;
" But, by themselves, there is attention paid
" To a mild boy, so forward, yet afraid.

" I made me interest at the inn's fire-side,
" Amid the scenes to bolder boys denied;
" For I had patrons there, and I was one,
" They judged, who noticed nothing that was done.
" 'A quiet lad!' would my protector say;
" 'To him, now, this is better than his play;
" 'Boys are as men; some active, shrewd, and keen,
" 'They look about if aught is to be seen;
" 'And some, like Richard here, have not a mind
" 'That takes a notice—but the lad is kind.'

" I loved in summer on the heath to walk,
" And seek the shepherd—shepherds love to talk:
" His superstition was of ranker kind,
" And he with tales of wonder stored my mind—
" Wonders that he in many a lonely eve
" Had seen, himself, and therefore must believe.
" His boy, his Joe, he said, from duty ran,
" Took to the sea and grew a fearless man:
" 'On yonder knoll—the sheep were in the fold—
" 'His spirit pass'd me, shivering-like and cold!
" 'I felt a fluttering, but I knew not how,
" 'And heard him utter, like a whisper, "Now!"
" 'Soon came a letter from a friend—to tell
" 'That he had fallen, and the time he fell.'

" Even to the smugglers' hut the rocks between,
" I have, adventurous in my wandering, been:
" Poor, pious Martha served the lawless tribe,
" And could their merits and their faults describe;
" Adding her thoughts; 'I talk, my child, to you,
" 'Who little think of what such wretches do.'

" I loved to walk where none had walk'd before,
" About the rocks that ran along the shore;
" Or far beyond the sight of men to stray,
" And take my pleasure when I lost my way;
" For then 't was mine to trace the hilly heath,
" And all the mossy moor that lies beneath:
" Here had I favourite stations, where I stood
" And heard the murmurs of the ocean-flood,
" With not a sound beside except when flew
" Aloft the lapwing or the grey curlew,
" Who with wild notes my fancied power defied,
" And mock'd the dreams of solitary pride.

" I loved to stop at every creek and bay
" Made by the river in its winding way,
" And call to memory—not by marks they bare,
" But by the thoughts that were created there.

" Pleasant it was to view the sea-gulls strive
" Against the storm, or in the ocean dive,
" With eager scream, or when they dropping gave
" Their closing wings, to sail upon the wave;
" Then as the winds and waters raged around,
" And breaking billows mix'd their deafening sound,
" They on the rolling deep securely hung,
" And calmly rode the restless waves among.
" Nor pleased it less around me to behold,
" Far up the beach, the yesty sea-foam roll'd;
" Or, from the shore upborne, to see on high
" Its frothy flakes in wild confusion fly:
" While the salt spray that clashing billows form
" Gave to the taste a feeling of the storm.

" Thus, with my favourite views, for many an hour
" Have I indulged the dreams of princely power:
" When the mind, wearied by excursions bold,
" The fancy jaded, and the bosom cold,
" Or when those wants that will on kings intrude,
" Or evening-fears, broke in on solitude,—

" When I no more my fancy could employ,
" I left in haste what I could not enjoy,
" And was my gentle mother's welcome boy.[7]

" But now thy walk,—this soft autumnal gloom
" Bids no delay—at night I will resume
" My subject, showing, not how I improved
" In my strange school, but what the things I loved,
" My first-born friendships, ties by forms unchecked,
" And all that boys acquire whom men neglect."

BOOK V.

RUTH.

Richard resumes his Narrative—Visits a Family in a Seaport—The Man and his Wife—Their Dwelling—Books, Number and Kind—The Friendship contracted—Employment there—Hannah, the Wife; her Manner; open Mirth and latent Grief—She gives the Story of Ruth, her Daughter—Of Thomas, a Sailor—Their Affection—A Pressgang—Reflections—Ruth disturbed in Mind—A Teacher sent to comfort her—His Fondness—Her Reception of him—Her Supplication—*Is refused*—She deliberates—Is decided.

RICHARD would wait till George the tale should ask,
Nor waited long.—He then resumed the task.

" South in the port, and eastward in the street,
" Rose a small dwelling, my beloved retreat,
" Where lived a pair, then old; the sons had fled
" The home they fill'd: a part of them were dead;
" Married a part; while some at sea remain'd,
" And stillness in the seaman's mansion reign'd;
" Lord of some petty craft, by night and day
" The man had fish'd each fathom of the bay.

" My friend the matron woo'd me, quickly won,
" To fill the station of an absent son
" (Him whom at school I knew, and Peter known,
" I took his home and mother for my own):
" I read, and doubly was I paid to hear
" Events that fell upon no listless ear:
" She grieved to say her parents could neglect
" Her education!—'t was a sore defect;
" She, who had ever such a vast delight
" To learn, and now could neither read nor write:
" But hear she could, and from our stores I took,
" Librarian meet! at her desire, our book.[1]

" Full twenty volumes—I would not exceed
" The modest truth—were there for me to read;
" These a long shelf contain'd, and they were found
" Books truly speaking, volumes fairly bound:
" The rest—for some of other kinds remain'd,
" And these a board beneath the shelf contain'd—
" Had their deficiencies in part; they lack'd
" One side or both, or were no longer back'd;
" But now became degraded from their place,
" And were but pamphlets of a bulkier race.
" Yet had we pamphlets, an inviting store,
" From sixpence downwards—nay, a part were more;
" Learning abundance, and the various kinds
" For relaxation—food for different minds;
" A piece of Wingate—thanks for all we have—
" What we of figures needed, fully gave;
" Culpepper, new in numbers, cost but thrice
" The ancient volume's unassuming price,
" But told what planet o'er each herb had power,
" And how to take it in the lucky hour.

" History we had—wars, treasons, treaties, crimes,
" From Julius Cæsar to the present times;
" Questions and answers, teaching what to ask
" And what reply,—a kind, laborious task:
" A scholar's book it was, who, giving, swore
" It held the whole he wish'd to know, and more.
" And we had poets, hymns and songs divine;
" The most we read not, but allow'd them fine.

" Our tracts were many, on the boldest themes—
" We had our metaphysics, spirits, dreams,
" Visions and warnings, and portentous sights,
" Seen, though but dimly, in the doleful nights,
" When the good wife her wintry vigil keeps,
" And thinks alone of him at sea, and weeps.

" Add to all these our works in single sheets,
" That our Cassandras sing about the streets:
" These, as I read, the grave good man would say,
" 'Nay, Hannah!' and she answer'd, 'What is Nay?
" 'What is there, pray, so hurtful in a song?
" 'It is our fancy only makes it wrong;
" 'His purer mind no evil thoughts alarm,
" 'And innocence protects him like a charm.'
" Then would the matron, when the song had pass'd,
" And her laugh over, ask a hymn at last;
" To the coarse jest she would attention lend,
" And to the pious psalm in reverence bend:
" She gave her every power and all her mind,
" As chance directed, or as taste inclined.

" More of our learning I will now omit;
" We had our Cyclopædias of Wit,
" And all our works,—rare fate!—were to our genius fit.

[7] [" After leaving school, some time passed before a situation as surgeon's apprentice could be found for young Crabbe; and, by his own confession, he has painted the manner in which most of this interval was spent, in those beautiful lines of his 'Richard,' which give, perhaps, as striking a picture of inquisitive sympathy, and solitary musings of a youthful poet, as can elsewhere be pointed out."—*Life*, pp. 5, 6.]

[1] [" Mild, obliging, and the most patient of listeners, young Crabbe was a great favourite with the old dames of Aldborough. Like his own 'Richard,' many a friendly

'matron woo'd him, quickly won,
To fill the station of an absent son.'

He admired the rude prints on their walls, rummaged their shelves for books or ballads, and read aloud to those whose eyes had failed them by the winter evening's fireside."—*Life*, p. 5.]

" When I had read, and we were weary grown
" Of other minds, the dame disclosed her own:
" And long have I in pleasing terror stay'd
" To hear of boys trepann'd, and girls betray'd;
" Ashamed so long to stay, and yet to go afraid.
" I could perceive, though Hannah bore full well
" The ills of life, that few with her would dwell,
" But pass away, like shadows o'er the plain
" From flying clouds, and leave it fair again;
" Still every evil, be it great or small,
" Would one past sorrow to the mind recall,
" The grand disease of life, to which she turns,
" And common cares and lighter suffering spurns.
" 'O! these are nothing,—they will never heed
" 'Such idle contests, who have fought indeed,
" 'And have the wounds unclosed.'—I understood
" My hint to speak, and my design pursued,
" Curious the secret of that heart to find,
" To mirth, to song, to laughter loud inclined,
" And yet to bear and feel a weight of grief behind:
" How does she thus her little sunshine throw
" Always before her?—I should like to know.
" My friend perceived, and would no longer hide
" The bosom's sorrow.—Could she not confide
" In one who wept, unhurt—in one who felt, untried?

" 'Dear child, I show you sins and sufferings strange,
" 'But you, like Adam, must for knowledge change
" 'That blissful ignorance: remember, then,
" 'What now you feel should be a check on men;
" 'For then your passions no debate allow,
" 'And therefore lay up resolution now.
" 'T is not enough, that, when you can persuade
" 'A maid to love, you know there 's promise made;
" 'T is not enough that you design to keep
" 'That promise made, nor leave your lass to weep:
" 'But you must guard yourself against the sin,
" 'And think it such to draw the party in:
" 'Nay, the more weak and easy to be won,
" 'The viler you who have the mischief done.

" 'I am not angry, love; but men should know
" 'They cannot always pay the debt they owe
" 'Their plighted honour; they may cause the ill
" 'They cannot lessen, though they feel a will;
" 'For *he* had truth with love, but love in youth
" 'Does wrong, that cannot be repair'd by truth.

" '*Ruth*—I may tell, too oft had she been told—
" 'Was tall and fair, and comely to behold,
" 'Gentle and simple, in her native place
" 'Not one compared with her in form or face;
" 'She was not merry, but she gave our hearth
" 'A cheerful spirit that was more than mirth.

" 'There was a sailor boy, and people said
" 'He was, as man, a likeness of the maid;
" 'But not in this—for he was ever glad,
" 'While Ruth was apprehensive, mild, and sad;
" 'A quiet spirit hers, and peace would seek
" 'In meditation: tender, mild, and meek!

" 'Her loved the lad most truly; and, in truth,
" 'She took an early liking to the youth:
" 'To her alone were his attentions paid,
" 'And they became the bachelor and maid.
" 'He wish'd to marry, but so prudent we
" 'And worldly wise, we said it could not be:
" 'They took the counsel,—may be, they approved,—
" 'But still they grieved and waited, hoped and loved.

" 'Now, my young friend, when of such state I speak
" 'As one of danger, you will be to seek;
" 'You know not, Richard, where the danger lies
" 'In loving hearts, kind words, and speaking eyes;
" 'For lovers speak their wishes with their looks
" 'As plainly, love, as you can read your books.
" 'Then, too, the meetings and the partings, all
" 'The playful quarrels in which lovers fall,
" 'Serve to one end—each lover is a child,
" 'Quick to resent and to be reconciled;
" 'And then their peace brings kindness that remains,
" 'And so the lover from the quarrel gains:
" 'When he has fault that she reproves, his fear
" 'And grief assure her she was too severe,
" 'And that brings kindness; when he bears an ill,
" 'Or disappointment, and is calm and still,
" 'She feels his own obedient to her will,
" 'And that brings kindness—and what kindness brings
" 'I cannot tell you:—these were trying things.
" 'They were as children, and they fell at length;
" 'The trial, doubtless, is beyond their strength
" 'Whom grace supports not; and will grace support
" 'The too confiding, who their danger court?
" 'Then they would marry, but were now too late;
" 'All could their fault in sport or malice state;
" 'And though the day was fix'd and now drew on,
" 'I could perceive my daughter's peace was gone;
" 'She could not bear the bold and laughing eye
" 'That gazed on her,—reproach she could not fly;
" 'Her grief she would not show, her shame could not deny:
" 'For some with many virtues come to shame,
" 'And some that lose them all preserve their name.

" 'Fix'd was the day; but ere that day appear'd,
" 'A frightful rumour through the place was heard;
" 'War, who had slept a while, awaked once more,
" 'And gangs came pressing till they swept the shore:
" 'Our youth was seized and quickly sent away,
" 'Nor would the wretches for his marriage stay,
" 'But bore him off, in barbarous triumph bore,
" 'And left us all our miseries to deplore:
" 'There were wives, maids, and mothers on the beach,
" 'And some sad story appertain'd to each;

" 'Most sad to Ruth—to neither could she go!
" 'But sat apart, and suffer'd matchless woe!
" 'On the vile ship they turn'd their earnest
view,
" 'Not one last look allow'd,—not one adieu!
" 'They saw the men on deck, but none distinctly knew.
" 'And there she stay'd, regardless of each eye,
" 'With but one hope—a fervent hope to die:
" 'Nor cared she now for kindness—all beheld
" 'Her, who invited none, and none repell'd;
" 'For there are griefs, my child, that sufferers
hide,
" 'And there are griefs that men display with
pride;
" 'But there are other griefs that, so we feel,
" 'We care not to display them nor conceal:
" 'Such were our sorrows on that fatal day,
" 'More than our lives the spoilers tore away;
" 'Nor did we heed their insult—some distress
" 'No form or manner can make more or less,
" 'And this is of that kind—this misery of a
Press!
" 'They say such things must be—perhaps they
must;
" 'But, sure, they need not fright us and disgust;
" 'They need not soul-less crews of ruffians send
" 'At once the ties of humble love to rend:
" 'A single day had Thomas stay'd on shore,
" 'He might have wedded, and we ask'd no more;
" 'And that stern man, who forced the lad away,
" 'Might have attended, and have graced the
day;
" 'His pride and honour might have been at
rest,
" 'It is no stain to make a couple bless'd!
" 'Bless'd!—no, alas! it was to ease the heart
" 'Of one sore pang, and then to weep and part!
" 'But this he would not.—English seamen fight
" 'For England's gain and glory—it is right:
" 'But will that public spirit be so strong,
" 'Fill'd, as it must be, with their private wrong?
" 'Forbid it, honour! one in all the fleet
" 'Should hide in war, or from the foe retreat;
" 'But is it just, that he who so defends
" 'His country's cause should hide him from her
friends?
" 'Sure, if they must upon our children seize,
" 'They might prevent such injuries as these;
" 'Might hours—nay, days—in many a case allow,
" 'And soften all the griefs we suffer now.
" 'Some laws, some orders, might in part redress
" 'The licensed insults of a British Press,
" 'That keeps the honest and the brave in awe,
" 'Where might is right, and violence is law.
" 'Be not alarm'd, my child; there 's none regard
" 'What you and I conceive so cruel-hard:
" 'There is compassion, I believe; but still
" 'One wants the power to help, and one the will,
" 'And so from war to war the wrongs remain,
" 'While Reason pleads, and Misery sighs in vain.

" 'Thus my poor Ruth was wretched and
undone,
" 'Nor had a husband for her only son,
" 'Nor had he father; hope she did a while,
" 'And would not weep, although she could not
smile;
" 'Till news was brought us that the youth was
slain,
" 'And then, I think, she never smiled again;
" 'Or, if she did, it was but to express
" 'A feeling far, indeed, from happiness!
" 'Something that her bewilder'd mind conceived:
" 'When she inform'd us that she never grieved,
" 'But was right merry, then her head was wild,
" 'And grief had gain'd possession of my child:
" 'Yet, though bewilder'd for a time, and prone
" 'To ramble much and speak aloud, alone,
" 'Yet did she all that duty ever ask'd,
" 'And more, her will self-govern'd and untask'd;
" 'With meekness bearing all reproach, all joy
" 'To her was lost; she wept upon her boy,
" 'Wish'd for his death, in fear that he might live
" 'New sorrow to a burden'd heart to give.

" 'There was a Teacher, where my husband
went—
" '*Sent*, as he told the people—what he meant
" 'You cannot understand, but—he was sent;
" 'This man from meeting came, and strove to win
" 'Her mind to peace by drawing off the sin,
" 'Or what it was, that, working in her breast,
" 'Robb'd it of comfort, confidence, and rest:
" 'He came and reason'd, and she seem'd to feel
" 'The pains he took—her griefs began to heal;
" 'She ever answer'd kindly when he spoke,
" 'And always thank'd him for the pains he took;
" 'So, after three long years, and all the while
" 'Wrapp'd up in grief, she bless'd us with a smile,
" 'And spoke in comfort; but she mix'd no more
" 'With younger persons, as she did before.

" 'Still Ruth was pretty; in her person neat;
" 'So thought the Teacher, when they chanced to
meet:
" 'He was a weaver by his worldly trade,
" 'But powerful work in the assemblies made;
" 'People came leagues to town to hear him sift
" 'The holy text,—he had the grace and *gift*;
" 'Widows and maidens flock'd to hear his voice;
" 'Of either kind he might have had his choice;—
" 'But he had chosen—we had seen how shy
" 'The girl was getting, my good man and I,—
" 'That when the weaver came, she kept with us,
" 'Where he his points and doctrines might
discuss;
" 'But in our bit of garden, or the room
" 'We call our parlour, there he must not come:
" 'She loved him not, and though she could attend
" 'To his discourses, as her guide and friend,
" 'Yet now to these she gave a listless ear,
" 'As if a friend she would no longer hear;
" 'This might he take for woman's art, and cried,
" '"Spouse of my heart, I must not be denied!"—
" 'Fearless he spoke, and I had hope to see
" 'My girl a wife—but this was not to be.

" 'My husband, thinking of his worldly store,
" 'And not, frail man, enduring to be poor,
" 'Seeing his friend would for his child provide
" 'And hers, he grieved to have the man denied:
" 'For Ruth, when press'd, rejected him, and grew
" 'To her old sorrow, as if that were new.
" '"Who shall support her?" said her father, "how
" 'Can I, infirm and weak as I am now?

" 'And here a loving fool"——This gave her pain,
" 'Severe, indeed, but she would not complain:
" 'Nor would consent, although the weaver grew
" 'More fond, and would the frighten'd girl pursue.

" 'Oh! much she begg'd him to forbear, to stand
" 'Her soul's kind friend, and not to ask her hand;
" 'She could not love him.—"Love me!" he replied,
" '"The love you mean is love unsanctified,
" 'An earthly, wicked, sensual, sinful kind,
" 'A creature-love, the passion of the blind."
" 'He did not court her, he would have her know,
" 'For that poor love that will on beauty grow;
" 'No! he would take her as the Prophet took
" 'One of the harlots in the holy book;
" 'And then he look'd so ugly and severe!
" 'And yet so fond—she could not hide her fear.

" 'This fondness grew her torment; she would fly,
" 'In woman's terror, if he came but nigh;
" 'Nor could I wonder he should odious prove,
" 'So like a ghost that left a grave for love.

" 'But still her father lent his cruel aid
" 'To the man's hope, and she was more afraid;
" 'He said no more she should his table share,
" 'But be the parish or the Teacher's care.
" '"Three days I give you: see that all be right
" 'On Monday morning—this is Thursday night—
" 'Fulfil my wishes, girl! or else forsake my sight!"

" 'I see her now; and, she that was so meek,
" 'It was a chance that she had power to speak,
" 'Now spoke in earnest—"Father! I obey,
" 'And will remember the appointed day!"

" 'Then came the man: she talk'd with him apart,
" 'And, I believe, laid open all her heart;
" 'But all in vain—she said to me, in tears,
" '"Mother! that man is not what he appears:
" 'He talks of heaven, and let him, if he will,
" 'But he has earthly purpose to fulfil;
" 'Upon my knees I begg'd him to resign
" 'The hand he asks: he said—It shall be mine:
" 'What! did the holy men of Scripture deign
" 'To hear a woman when she said Refrain?
" 'Of whom they chose they took them wives, and these
" 'Made it their study and their wish to please;
" 'The women then were faithful and afraid;
" 'As Sarah Abraham, they their lords obey'd,
" 'And so she styled him; 't is in later days
" 'Of foolish love that we our women praise,
" 'Fall on the knee, and raise the suppliant hand,
" 'And court the favour that we might command.—

" '"O! my dear mother, when this man has power,
" 'How will he treat me:—first may beasts devour!
" 'Or death in every form that I could prove,
" 'Except this selfish being's hateful love."

" 'I gently blamed her, for I knew how hard
" 'It is to force affection and regard.

" 'Ah! my dear lad, I talk to you as one
" 'Who know the misery of a heart undone:
" 'You knows it not; but, dearest boy, when man,
" 'Do not an ill because you find you can:
" 'Where is the triumph? when such things men seek,
" 'They only drive to wickedness the weak.

" 'Weak was poor Ruth, and this good man so hard,
" 'That to her weakness he had no regard:
" 'But we had two days' peace; he came, and then
" 'My daugher whisper'd, "Would there were no men!
" 'None to admire or scorn us, none to vex
" 'A simple, trusting, fond, believing sex;
" 'Who truly love the worth that men profess,
" 'And think too kindly for their happiness."'

" Poor Ruth! few heroines in the tragic page
" Felt more than thee in thy contracted stage;
" Fair, fond, and virtuous, they our pity move,
" Impell'd by duty, agonized by love:
" But no Mandane, who in dread has knelt
" On the bare boards, has greater terrors felt,
" Nor been by warring passions more subdued,
" Than thou, by this man's grovelling wish pursued;
" Doom'd to a parent's judgment, all unjust,
" Doom'd the chance mercy of the world to trust,
" Or to wed grossness and conceal disgust.

" 'If Ruth was frail, she had a mind too nice
" 'To wed with that which she beheld as vice—
" 'To take a reptile, who, beneath a show
" 'Of peevish zeal, let carnal wishes grow:
" 'Proud and yet mean, forbidding and yet full
" 'Of eager appetites, devout and dull,
" 'Waiting a legal right that he might seize
" 'His own, and his impatient spirit ease,
" 'Who would at once his pride and love indulge,
" 'His temper humour, and his spite divulge.
" 'This the poor victim saw—"A second time,"
" 'Sighing, she said, "shall I commit the crime,
" 'And now untempted? Can the form or rite
" 'Make me a wife in my Creator's sight?
" 'Can I the words without a meaning say?
" 'Can I pronounce love, honour, or obey?
" 'And if I cannot, shall I dare to wed,
" 'And go a harlot to a loathed bed?
" 'Never, dear mother! my poor boy and I
" 'Will at the mercy of a parish lie;
" 'Reproved for wants that vices would remove,
" 'Reproach'd for vice that I could never love,
" 'Mix'd with a crew long wedded to disgrace,
" 'A vulgar, forward, equalizing race,—
" 'And am I doom'd to beg a dwelling in that place?"

" 'Such was her reasoning: many times she weigh'd
" 'The evils all, and was of each afraid;
" 'She loath'd the common board, the vulgar seat,
" 'Where shame, and want, and vice, and sorrow meet,
" 'Where frailty finds allies, where guilt insures retreat.

" ' But peace again is fled: the Teacher comes,
" ' And new importance, haughtier air assumes.

" ' No hapless victim of a tyrant's love
" ' More keenly felt, or more resisting strove
" ' Against her fate: she look'd on every side,
" ' But there were none to help her, none to guide;—
" ' And he, the man who should have taught the soul,
" ' Wish'd but the body in his base control.

" ' She left her infant on the Sunday morn,
" ' A creature doom'd to shame! in sorrow born;
" ' A thing that languish'd, nor arrived at age
" ' When the man's thoughts with sin and pain engage—
" ' She came not home to share our humble meal,
" ' Her father thinking what his child would feel
" ' From his hard sentence—still she came not home.
" ' The night grew dark, and yet she was not come;
" ' The east-wind roar'd, the sea return'd the sound,
" ' And the rain fell as if the world were drown'd:
" ' There were no lights without, and my good man,
" ' To kindness frighten'd, with a groan began
" ' To talk of Ruth, and pray: and then he took
" ' The Bible down, and read the holy book;
" ' For he had learning: and when that was done
" ' We sat in silence—Whither could we run?
" ' We said; and then rush'd frighten'd from the door,
" ' For we could bear our own conceit no more:
" ' We call'd on neighbours—there she had not been;
" ' We met some wanderers—ours they had not seen;
" ' We hurried o'er the beach, both north and south,
" ' Then join'd, and wander'd to our haven's mouth:
" ' Where rush'd the falling waters wildly out,
" ' I scarcely heard the good man's fearful shout,
" ' Who saw a something on the billow ride,
" ' And—"Heaven have mercy on our sins!" he cried,
" ' "It is my child!"—and to the present hour
" ' So he believes—and spirits have the power.

" ' And she was gone! the waters wide and deep
" ' Roll'd o'er her body as she lay asleep.
" ' She heard no more the angry waves and wind,
" ' She heard no more the threat'ning of mankind;
" ' Wrapp'd in dark weeds, the refuse of the storm,
" ' To the hard rock was borne her comely form!

" ' But, oh! what storm was in that mind! what strife!
" ' That could compel her to lay down her life!
" ' For she was seen within the sea to wade,
" ' By one at distance, when she first had pray'd;
" ' Then to a rock within the hither shoal
" ' Softly and with a fearful step she stole;
" ' Then, when she gain'd it, on the top she stood
" ' A moment still—and dropp'd into the flood!
" ' The man cried loudly, but he cried in vain,—
" ' She heard not then—she never heard again!
" ' She had—pray, Heav'n!—she had that world in sight,
" ' Where frailty mercy finds, and wrong has right;
" ' But, sure, in this her portion such has been,
" ' Well had it still remain'd a world unseen!'

" Thus far the dame: the passions will dispense
" To such a wild and rapid eloquence—
" Will to the weakest mind their strength impart,
" And give the tongue the language of the heart."[2]

BOOK VI.[1]

ADVENTURES OF RICHARD CONCLUDED.

Richard relates his Illness and Retirement—A Village Priest and his two Daughters—His peculiar Studies—His Simplicity of Character—Arrival of a third Daughter—Her Zeal in his Conversion—Their Friendship—How terminated—A happy Day—Its Commencement and Progress—A Journey along the Coast—Arrival as a Guest—Company—A Lover's Jealousy—it increases—dies away—An Evening Walk—Suspense—Apprehension—Resolution—Certainty.

" This, then, dear Richard, was the way you took
" To gain instruction—thine a curious book,
" Containing much of both the false and true:
" But thou hast read it, and with profit too.

" Not dead, but sick, and I too weary grow
" Of reaping nothing from the things I sow.
" What is the pleasure—thou perhaps canst say—
" Of playing tunes, if none can hear thee play?
" Timid and proud, the world I cannot court,
" Nor show my labours for the critic's sport.
" Hast thou the courage, Richard? hast thou tried
" An author's perils? hast thou felt his pride?
" For vain the efforts, and they quickly tire,
" If we alone our precious things admire."

" Not so," said Richard, and acquired a look
That some expression from his feelings took;
" Oh! my dear Brother, if this Muse of mine,
" Who prompts the idle thought, the trifling line,
" If she who calmly looks around, nor more
" Muse of the Mad, the Foolish, and the Poor,

2 ["Strong as Mr. Crabbe's painting is, its strength can be fully felt by those alone who have read the *whole* story of 'Ruth,' and of all her wild and confounding afflictions. Never was hopeless distress, day by day persecuted unto the death, delineated with such fearful truth: but the whole description so hangs together in its darkness, that no fragments could present an adequate idea of the desolation."—WILSON.]

1. [In the original draft the Book opens thus:—
The evening came: "My brother, what employs
" Thy mind?" said Richard; "what disturbs thy joys?
" Hast thou not all the good the world can give,
" And liv'st a life that kings might sigh to live?
" Can nothing please thee? Thou wert wont to seize
" On passing themes, and make the trifles please.
" Thy Muse has many a pleasant fancy bred,
" And clothed in lively manner!—is she dead?"

" Come, then, my Brother, now thy tale complete—
" I know thy first embarking in the fleet,
" Thy entrance in the army, and thy gain
" Of plenteous laurels in the wars of Spain,
" And what then follow'd; but I wish to know
" When thou that heart hadst courage to bestow,
" When to declare it gain'd, and when to stand
" Before the priest, and give the plighted hand;
" So shall I boldness from thy frankness gain
" To paint the frenzy that possess'd my brain;
" For rather there than in my heart I found
" Was my disease—a poison, not a wound,
" A madness, Richard—but, I pray thee, tell
" Whom hast thou loved so dearly and so well?" [2]

The younger man his gentle host obey'd,
For some respect, though not required, was paid;
Perhaps, with all that independent pride,
Their different states would to the memory glide;
Yet was his manner unconstrain'd and free,
And nothing in it like servility.

Then he began:—" When first I reach'd the land,
" I was so ill that death appear'd at hand;
" And though the fever left me, yet I grew
" So weak 't was judged that life would leave me too.
" I sought a village-priest, my mother's friend,
" And I believed with him my days would end:
" The man was kind, intelligent, and mild,
" Careless and shrewd, yet simple as the child;

" If she can pleasure—and she can—impart,
" Can wing the fancy, can enlarge the heart;
" What must a Muse of strength, of force, of fire,
" In the true Poet's ample mind inspire?
" What must he feel, who can the soul express,
" Of saint or hero?—he must be no less.
" Nor less of evil minds he knows the pain,
" But quickly lost the anguish and the stain;
" While with the wisest, happiest, purest, best,
" His soul assimilates and loves to rest.
" Crowns would I spurn, and empires would I lose,
" For inspiration from the sacred Muse."

" A song," said George, " and I my secret store,
" Confined in dust and darkness, will explore.
" Poet with poet, bard and critic too,
" We fear no censure, and dread no review.
" A judge so placed must be to errors kind,
" And yield the mercy that he hopes to find.
" Begin then, Richard; put thy fears aside;
" Shall I condemn, who must myself be tried?
" In me at least my Brother may confide.
" In hope of wearing, I shall yield the bays,
" And my self-love shall give my rival praise."]

[2] [In the original MS. thus:—

" Wilt thou explain? I shall not grieve to share
" A lover's sorrow, or a husband's care?"

Kindness like this had moved a sterner man,
Richard much more. He smiled, and thus began:—

" No more I loved the sea; that plunge had tamed
" My blood, by youth in idleness inflamed:
" To my affairs I forced my mind t' attend,
" And sought the town to counsel with a friend.
" Much we debated—Could I now resign
" My earthly views, and look to things divine?
" Could I to merchandize my mind persuade,
" And wait in patience for the gain of trade?

" For of the wisdom of the world his share
" And mine were equal—neither had to spare;
" Else—with his daughters, beautiful and poor—
" He would have kept a sailor from his door:
" Two then were present, who adorn'd his home,
" But ever speaking of a third to come;
" Cheerful they were, not too reserved or free,—
" I loved them both, and never wish'd them three.

" The Vicar's self, still further to describe,
" Was of a simple, but a studious tribe;
" He from the world was distant, not retired,
" Nor of it much possess'd, nor much desired:
" Grave in his purpose, cheerful in his eye,
" And with a look of frank benignity.
" He lost his wife when they together pass'd
" Years of calm love, that triumph'd to the last.
" He much of nature, not of man, had seen,
" Yet his remarks were often shrewd and keen:
" Taught not by books t' approve or to condemn,
" He gain'd but little that he knew from them:
" He read with reverence and respect the few
" Whence he his rules and consolations drew;
" But men and beasts, and all that lived or moved,
" Were books to him: he studied them and loved.

" He knew the plants in mountain, wood, or mead;
" He knew the worms that on the foliage feed;
" Knew the small tribes that 'scape the careless eye,
" The plant's disease that breeds the embryo-fly;
" And the small creatures who on bark or bough
" Enjoy their changes, changed we know not how;

" Or if I could not early habits quit,
" Had I a stock, and could subsist on wit?

" Measures like these became my daily themes,
" My airy castles, my projector's dreams.
" But health, so long neglected, now became
" No more the blessing of my failing frame:
" A fever seized it, of that dangerous kind,
" That, while it taints the blood, infects the mind.
" I traced her flight as Reason slowly fled,
" And her last act assured me Hope was dead:
" But Reason err'd, and when she came again
" To aid the senses and direct the brain,
" She found a body weak, but well disposed
" For life's enjoyments, and the grave was closed.
" But danger past, and my recovery slow,
" I sought the health that mountain gales bestow,
" And quiet walks where peace and violets grow.

" Now, my dear Brother, when the languid frame
" Has this repose, and when the blood is tame,
" Yet strength increasing, and when every hour
" Gives some increase of pleasure and of power;
" When every sense partakes of fresh delight,
" And every object wakes an appetite;
" When the mind rests not, but for ever roves
" On all around, and as it meets approves;
" Then feels the heart its bliss—that season then is love's.

" Think of me thus disposed, and think me then
" Retired from crowded streets and busy men,
" In a neat cottage, by the sweetest stream
" That ever warbled in a poet's dream;
" An ancient wood behold, so vast, so deep,
" That hostile armies might in safety sleep;
" Where loving pairs had no observers near,
" And, fearing not themselves, had none to fear;
" There to fair walks, fresh meadows, and clear skies,
" I fled as flee the weary and the wise.
" My host," &c.]

" But now th' imperfect being scarcely moves,
" And now takes wing and seeks the sky it loves.

" He had no system, and forbore to read
" The learned labours of th' immortal Swede;
" But smiled to hear the creatures he had known
" So long were now in class and order shown,
" Genus and species—' Is it meet,' said he,
" ' This creature's name should one so sounding be?
" ' 'T is but a fly, though first-born of the spring—
" ' Bombylius majus dost thou call the thing?
" ' Majus, indeed! and yet, in fact, 't is true,
" ' We all are majors, all are minors too,
" ' Except the first and last,—th' immensely distant two.
" ' And here again,—what call the learned this?
" ' Both Hippobosca[3] and Hirundinis?
" ' Methinks the creature should be proud to find
" ' That he employs the talents of mankind,
" ' And that his sovereign master shrewdly looks,
" ' Counts all his parts, and puts them in his books.
" ' Well! go thy way, for I do feel it shame
" ' To stay a being with so proud a name.'

" Such were his daughters, such my quiet friend,
" And pleasant was it thus my days to spend;
" But when Matilda at her home I saw,
" Whom I beheld with anxiousness and awe,
" The ease and quiet that I found before
" At once departed, and return'd no more.
" No more their music soothed me as they play'd,
" But soon her words a strong impression made;
" The sweet Enthusiast, so I deem'd her, took
" My mind, and fix'd it to her speech and look;
" My soul, dear girl! she made her constant care,
" But never whisper'd to my heart, ' Beware!'
" In love no dangers rise till we are in the snare.

" Her father sometimes question'd of my creed,
" And seem'd to think it might amendment need;
" But great the difference when the pious maid
" To the same errors her attention paid;
" Her sole design that I should think aright,
" And my conversion her supreme delight:[4]
" Pure was her mind, and simple her intent,
" Good all she sought, and kindness all she meant.
" Next to religion, friendship was our theme,
" Related souls and their refined esteem:
" We talked of scenes where this is real found,
" And love subsists without a dart or wound;
" But there intruded thoughts not all serene,
" And wishes not so calm would intervene."

" Saw not her father?"

" Yes; but saw no more
" Than he had seen without a fear before:

" He had subsisted by the church and plough,
" And saw no cause for apprehension now.
" We, too, could live: he thought not passion wrong,
" But only wonder'd we delay'd so long.
" More had he wonder'd had he known esteem
" Was all we mention'd, friendship was our theme.—

" Laugh, if you please, I must my tale pursue:—
" This sacred friendship thus in secret grew
" An intellectual love, most tender, chaste, and true—
" Unstain'd, we said, nor knew we how it chanced
" To gain some earthly soil as it advanced;
" But yet my friend, and she alone, could prove
" How much it differ'd from romantic love:
" But this and more I pass—No doubt, at length,
" We could perceive the weakness of our strength.

" O! days remember'd well! remember'd all!
" The bitter-sweet, the honey, and the gall;
" Those garden rambles in the silent night,
" Those trees so shady, and that moon so bright;
" That thickset alley by the arbour closed,
" That woodbine seat where we at last reposed;
" And then the hopes that came and then were gone,
" Quick as the clouds beneath the moon pass'd on:
" ' Now, in this instant, shall my love be shown,'
" I said—O! no, the happy time is flown!

" You smile: remember, I was weak and low,
" And fear'd the passion as I felt it grow:
" ' Will she,' I said, ' to one so poor attend,
" ' Without a prospect, and without a friend?'
" I dared not ask her—till a rival came—
" But hid the secret, slow-consuming flame.

" I once had seen him; then familiar, free,
" More than became a common guest to be;
" ' And sure,' I said, ' he has a look of pride
" ' And inward joy,—a lover satisfied.'

" Can you not, Brother, on adventures past,
" A thought, as on a lively prospect, cast?
" On days of dear remembrance! days that seem,
" When past—nay, even when present, like a dream—
" Those white and blessed days, that softly shine
" On few, nor oft on them—have they been thine?"

George answer'd, " Yes! dear Richard, through the years
" Long past, a day so white and mark'd appears:[5]

[3] The horse-fly.

[4] [See, in the Appendix, Mr. Crabbe's Lines addressed to Miss Elmy, in 1777.

"My Mira came! be ever bless'd the hour
That drew my thoughts half way from folly's power!
She first my soul with loftier notions fired;
I saw their truth, and as I saw admired:
With greater force returning reason moved,
And as returning reason urged, I loved:
Till pain, reflection, hope, and love allied
My bliss precarious to a surer guide—
To Him who gives pain, reason, hope, and love,
Each for that end that angels must approve;
One beam of light He gave my mind to see,
And gave that light, my heavenly fair, by thee;
That beam shall raise my thoughts, and mend my strain,
Nor shall my vows, nor prayers, nor verse be vain."]

[5] It is recorded of the Scythians, that they were accustomed to mark every happy day with a white stone, and every unhappy day with a black one.

" As in the storm that pours destruction round,
" Is here and there a ship in safety found;
" So in the storms of life some days appear
" More bless'd and bright for the preceding fear;
" These times of pleasure that in life arise,
" Like spots in deserts, that delight, surprise,
" And to our wearied senses give the more,
" For all the waste behind us and before;
" And thou, dear Richard, hast then had thy share
" Of those enchanting times that baffle care?"

" Yes, I have felt this life-refreshing gale
" That bears us onward when our spirits fail;
" That gives those spirits vigour and delight—
" I would describe it could I do it right.

" Such days have been—a day of days was one,
" When, rising gaily with the rising sun,
" I took my way to join a happy few,
" Known not to me, but whom Matilda knew,
" To whom she went a guest, and message sent,
" 'Come thou to us,' and as a guest I went.[6]

" There are two ways to Brandon—by the heath
" Above the cliff, or on the sand beneath,
" Where the small pebbles, wetted by the wave,
" To the new day reflected lustre gave:
" At first above the rocks I made my way,
" Delighted looking at the spacious bay,
" And the large fleet that to the northward steer'd
" Full sail, that glorious in my view appear'd;
" For where does man evince his full control
" O'er subject matter,—where displays the soul
" Its mighty energies with more effect,
" Than when her powers that moving mass direct?
" Than when man guides the ship man's art has made,
" And makes the winds and waters yield him aid?

" Much as I long'd to see the maid I loved,
" Through scenes so glorious I at leisure moved;
" For there are times when we do not obey
" The master-passion—when we yet delay—
" When absence, soon to end, we yet prolong,
" And dally with our wish although so strong.

" High were my joys, but they were sober too,
" Nor reason spoil'd the pictures fancy drew;
" I felt—rare feeling in a world like this—
" The sober certainty of waking bliss;
" Add too the smaller aids to happy men,
" Convenient helps—these too were present then.
" But what are spirits? light indeed and gay
" They are, like winter flowers, nor last a day;
" Comes a rude icy wind, they feel, and fade away.

" High beat my heart when to the house I came,
" And when the ready servant gave my name;
" But when I enter'd that pernicious room,
" Gloomy it look'd, and painful was the gloom;
" And jealous was the pain, and deep the sigh,
" Caused by this gloom, and pain, and jealousy:

" For there Matilda sat, and her beside
" That rival soldier, with a soldier's pride;
" With self-approval in his laughing face,
" His seem'd the leading spirit of the place:
" She was all coldness—yet I thought a look,
" But that corrected, tender welcome spoke:
" It was as lightning which you think you see,
" But doubt, and ask if lightning it could be.

" Confused and quick my introduction pass'd,
" When I, a stranger and on strangers cast,
" Beheld the gallant man as he display'd
" Uncheck'd attention to the guilty maid;
" O! how it grieved me that she dared t' excite
" Those looks in him that show'd so much delight;
" Egregious coxcomb! there—he smiled again,
" As if he sought to aggravate my pain:
" Still she attends—I must approach, and find,
" Or make, a quarrel, to relieve my mind.

" In vain I try—politeness as a shield
" The angry strokes of my contempt repell'd;
" Nor must I violate the social law
" That keeps the rash and insolent in awe.
" Once I observed, on hearing my replies,
" The woman's terror fix'd on me the eyes
" That look'd entreaty; but the guideless rage
" Of jealous minds no softness can assuage.
" But, lo! they rise, and all prepare to take
" The promised pleasure on the neighbouring lake.

" Good Heaven! they whisper! Is it come to this
" Already?—then may I my doubt dismiss:
" Could he so soon a timid girl persuade?
" What rapid progress has the coxcomb made!
" And yet how cool her looks, and how demure!
" The falling snow nor lily's flower so pure:
" What can I do? I must the pair attend,
" And watch this horrid business to its end.
" There, forth they go! He leads her to the shore—
" Nay, I must follow,—I can bear no more:
" What can the handsome gipsy have in view
" In trifling thus, as she appears to do?
" I, who for months have labour'd to succeed,
" Have only lived her vanity to feed.

" O! you will make me room—'t is very kind,
" And meant for him—it tells him he must mind;
" Must not be careless:—I can serve to draw
" The soldier on, and keep the man in awe.
" O! I did think she had a guileless heart,
" Without deceit, capriciousness, or art;
" And yet a stranger, with a coat of red,
" Has, by an hour's attention, turn'd her head.

" Ah! how delicious was the morning-drive,
" The soul awaken'd, and its hopes alive:
" How dull this scene by trifling minds enjoy'd,
" The heart in trouble and its hope destroy'd.

" Well, now we land—And will he yet support
" This part? What favour has he now to court?
" Favour! O, no! He means to quit the fair;
" How strange! how cruel! Will she not despair?
" Well! take her hand—no further if you please,
" I cannot suffer fooleries like these:—

[6] [MS.:—" With whom she tarried, a delighted guest!
" Delightful ever! blessing still and bless'd."]

" How? ' Love to Julia ! '—to his wife ?—O ! dear
" And injured creature, how must I appear,
" Thus haughty in my looks, and in my words severe ?
" Her love to Julia, to the schoolday friend
" To whom those letters she has lately penn'd !
" Can she forgive ? And now I think again,
" The man was neither insolent nor vain ;
" Good humour chiefly would a stranger trace,
" Were he impartial, in the air or face ;
" And I so splenetic the whole way long,
" And she so patient—it was very wrong.[7]

" The boat had landed in a shady scene ;
" The grove was in its glory, fresh and green ;
" The showers of late had swell'd the branch and bough,
" And the sun's fervour made them pleasant now.
" Hard by an oak arose in all its pride,
" And threw its arms along the water's side ;
" Its leafy limbs, that on the glassy lake
" Stretch far, and all those dancing shadows make.

" And now we walk—now smaller parties seek
" Or sun or shade as pleases—Shall I speak ?
" Shall I forgiveness ask, and then apply
" For——O ! that vile and intercepting cry !
" Alas ! what mighty ills can trifles make,—
" A hat ! the idiot's—fallen in the lake !
" What serious mischief can such idlers do !
" I almost wish the head had fallen too.

" No more they leave us, but will hover round,
" As if amusement at our cost they found ;
" Vex'd and unhappy I indeed had been,
" Had I not something in my charmer seen
" Like discontent, that, though corrected, dwelt
" On that dear face, and told me what she felt.

" Now must we cross the lake, and as we cross'd
" Was my whole soul in sweet emotion lost ;
" Clouds in white volumes roll'd beneath the moon,
" Softening her light that on the waters shone :
" This was such bliss ! even then it seem'd relief
" To veil the gladness in a show of grief :
" We sigh'd as we conversed, and said, how deep
" This lake on which those broad dark shadows sleep ;
" There is between us and a watery grave
" But a thin plank, and yet our fate we brave.
" ' What if it burst ? ' ' Matilda, then my care
" Would be for thee : all danger I would dare,
" And, should my efforts fail, thy fortune would I share.'
" ' The love of life,' she said, ' would powerful prove ! '
" ' O ! not so powerful as the strength of love :'—
" A look of kindness gave the grateful maid,
" That had the real effort more than paid.

" But here we land, and haply now may choose
" Companions home—our way too we may lose :
" In these drear, dark, inosculating lanes,
" The very native of his doubt complains ;
" No wonder then that in such lonely ways
" A stranger, heedless of the country, strays ;
" A stranger, too, whose many thoughts all meet
" In one design, and none regard his feet.

" ' Is this the path ?'—the cautious fair one cries ;
" I answer, ' Yes !'—' We shall our friends surprise,'
" She added, sighing—I return the sighs.

" ' Will they not wonder ?' ' O ! they would, indeed,
" ' Could they the secrets of this bosom read,
" ' These chilling doubts, these trembling hopes I feel !
" ' The faint, fond hopes I can no more conceal—
" ' I love thee, dear Matilda !—to confess
" ' The fact is dangerous, fatal to suppress.

" ' And now in terror I approach the home
" ' Where I may wretched but not doubtful come,
" ' Where I must be all ecstasy, or all—
" ' O ! what will you a wretch rejected call ?
" ' Not man, for I shall lose myself, and be
" ' A creature lost to reason, losing thee.

" ' Speak, my Matilda ! on the rack of fear
" ' Suspend me not—I would my sentence hear,
" ' Would learn my fate——Good Heaven ! and what portend
" ' These tears ?—and fall they for thy wretched friend ?
" ' Or '———but I cease ; I cannot paint the bliss
" From a confession soft and kind as this ;
" Nor where we walk'd, nor how our friends we met,
" Or what their wonder—I am wondering yet ;
" For he who nothing heeds has nothing to forget.

" All thought, yet thinking nothing—all delight
" In everything, but nothing in my sight !
" Nothing I mark or learn, but am possess'd
" Of joys I cannot paint, and I am bless'd
" In all that I conceive—whatever is, is best.
" Ready to aid all beings, I would go
" The world around to succour human woe ;
" Yet am so largely happy, that it seems
" There are no woes, and sorrows are but dreams.

" There is a college joy, to scholars known,
" When the first honours are proclaim'd their own ;
" There is ambition's joy, when, in their race
" A man surpassing rivals gains his place :
" There is a beauty's joy amid a crowd
" To have that beauty her first fame allow'd ;

[7] ["Truth compels me to say that Mr. Crabbe was by no means free from the less amiable sign of a strong attachment —jealousy. The description of this self torment, which occurs in the sixth book of 'Tales of the Hall,' could only have been produced by one who had undergone the pain himself; and the catastrophe which follows may be considered as a vivid representation of his happier hours at Beccles. Miss Elmy was then remarkably pretty; she had a lively disposition, and, having generally more than her share of attention in a mixed company, her behaviour might, without any coquettish inclination, occasion painful surmises in a sensitive lover, who could only at intervals join her circle."—*Life, unté*, p. 11.]

" And there 's the conqueror's joy, when, dubious held
" And long the fight, he sees the foe repell'd.

" But what are these, or what are other joys,
" That charm kings, conquerors, beauteous nymphs, and boys,
" Or greater yet, if greater yet be found,
" To that delight when love's dear hope is crown'd?
" To the first beating of a lover's heart,
" When the loved maid endeavours to impart,
" Frankly yet faintly, fondly yet in fear,
" The kind confession that he holds so dear?
" Now in the morn of our return how strange
" Was this new feeling, this delicious change,
" That sweet delirium, when I gazed in fear
" That all would yet be lost and disappear.

" Such was the blessing, that I sought for pain,
" In some degree to be myself again;
" And when we met a shepherd old and lame,
" Cold and diseased, it seem'd my blood to tame:
" And I was thankful for the moral sight,
" That soberised the vast and wild delight."

BOOK VII.

THE ELDER BROTHER.

Conversation—Story of the elder Brother—His romantic Views and Habits—The Scene of his Meditations—Their Nature—Interrupted by an Adventure—The Consequences of it—A strong and permanent Passion—Search of its Object—Long ineffectual—How found—The first Interview—The second—End of the Adventure—Retirement.

" Thanks, my dear Richard, and I pray thee, deign
" To speak the truth—does all this love remain,
" And all this joy? for views and flights sublime,
" Ardent and tender, are subdued by time.
" Speak'st thou of her to whom thou mad'st thy vows,
" Of my fair sister, of thy lawful spouse?
" Or art thou talking some frail love about,
" The rambling fit before th' abiding gout?"

" Nay, spare me, Brother, an adorer spare:
" Love and the gout! thou wouldst not these compare?"

" Yea, and correctly; teasing ere they come,
" They then confine their victim to his home:
" In both are previous feints and false attacks,
" Both place the grieving patient on their racks;
" They both are ours, with all they bring, for life,
" 'T is not in us t' expel or gout or wife;
" On man a kind of dignity they shed,
" A sort of gloomy pomp about his bed:
" Then if he leaves them, go where'er he will,
" They have a claim upon his body still;
" Nay, when they quit him, as they sometimes do,
" What is there left t' enjoy or to pursue?—
" But dost thou love this woman?"
" O! beyond
" What I can tell thee of the true and fond:
" Hath she not soothed me, sick—enriched me, poor—
" And banish'd death and misery from my door?
" Has she not cherish'd every moment's bliss,
" And made an Eden of a world like this?
" When Care would strive with us his watch to keep,
" Has she not sung the snarling fiend to sleep?
" And when Distress has look'd us in the face,
" Has she not told him, 'Thou art not Disgrace'?"

" I must behold her, Richard; I must see
" This patient spouse who sweetens misery.
" But didst thou need, and wouldst thou not apply?—
" Nay, thou wert right—but then how wrong was I!"

" My indiscretion was"——
" No more repeat;
" Would I were nothing worse than indiscreet;—
" But still there is a plea that I could bring,
" Had I the courage to describe the thing."

" Then thou, too, Brother, couldst of weakness tell;
" Thou, too, hast found the wishes that rebel
" Against the sovereign reason; at some time
" Thou hast been fond, heroic, and sublime;
" Wrote verse, it may be, and for one dear maid
" The sober purposes of life delay'd;
" From year to year the fruitless chase pursued,
" And hung enamour'd o'er the flying good:
" Then be thy weakness to a Brother shown,
" And give him comfort who displays his own."

" Ungenerous youth! dost thou presuming ask
" A man so grave his failings to unmask?
" What if I tell thee of a waste of time,
" That on my spirit presses as a crime,
" Wilt thou despise me?—I, who, soaring, fell,
" So late to rise—Hear then the tale I tell:
" Who tells what thou shalt hear, esteems his hearer well.

" Yes, my dear Richard, thou shalt hear me own
" Follies and frailties thou hast never known;
" Thine was a frailty,—folly, if you please,—
" But mine a flight, a madness, a disease.

" Turn with me to my twentieth year, for then
" The lover's frenzy ruled the poet's pen;
" When virgin reams were soil'd with lays of love,
" The flinty hearts of fancied nymphs to move:
" Then was I pleased in lonely ways to tread,
" And muse on tragic tales of lovers dead;
" For all the merit I could then descry
" In man or woman was for love to die.

" I mused on charmers chaste, who pledged their truth,
" And left no more the once-accepted youth;

" Though he disloyal, lost, diseased, became,
" The widow'd turtle's was a deathless flame;
" This faith, this feeling, gave my soul delight,
" Truth in the lady, ardour in the knight.

" I built me castles wondrous rich and rare,
" Few castle-builders could with me compare;
" The hall, the palace, rose at my command,
" And these I fill'd with objects great and grand.
" Virtues sublime, that nowhere else would live,
" Glory and pomp, that I alone could give;
" Trophies and thrones by matchless valour gain'd,
" Faith unreproved, and chastity unstain'd;
" With all that soothes the sense and charms the soul,
" Came at my call, and were in my control.

" And who was I? a slender youth and tall,
" In manner awkward, and with fortune small;
" With visage pale, my motions quick and slow,
" That fall and rising in the spirits show;
" For none could more by outward signs express
" What wise men lock within the mind's recess;
" Had I a mirror set before my view,
" I might have seen what such a form could do;
" Had I within the mirror truth beheld,
" I should have such presuming thoughts repell'd:
" But, awkward as I was, without the grace
" That gives new beauty to a form or face,
" Still I expected friends most true to prove,
" And grateful, tender, warm, assiduous love.

" Assured of this, that love's delicious bond
" Would hold me ever faithful, ever fond;
" It seem'd but just that I in love should find
" A kindred heart as constant and as kind.
" Give me, I cried, a beauty; none on earth
" Of higher rank or nobler in her birth;
" Pride of her race, her father's hope and care,
" Yet meek as children of the cottage are;
" Nursed in the court, and there by love pursued,
" But fond of peace, and bless'd in solitude;
" By rivals honour'd, and by beauties praised,
" Yet all unconscious of the envy raised;
" Suppose her this, and from attendants freed,
" To want my prowess in a time of need,
" When safe and grateful she desires to show
" She feels the debt that she delights to owe,
" And loves the man who saved her in distress—
" So Fancy will'd, nor would compound for less.

" This was my dream.—In some auspicious hour,
" In some sweet solitude, in some green bower,
" Whither my fate should lead me, there, unseen,
" I should behold my fancy's gracious queen,
" Singing sweet song! that I should hear a while,
" Then catch the transient glory of a smile;
" Then at her feet with trembling hope should kneel,
" Such as rapt saints and raptured lovers feel;
" To watch the chaste unfoldings of her heart,
" In joy to meet, in agony to part,
" And then in tender song to soothe my grief,
" And hail, in glorious rhyme, my *Lady of the Leaf.*

" To dream these dreams I chose a woody scene,
" My guardian-shade; the world and me between;
" A green enclosure, where beside its bound
" A thorny fence beset its beauties round,
" Save where some creature's force had made a way
" For me to pass, and in my kingdom stray:
" Here then I stray'd, then sat me down to call,
" Just as I will'd, my shadowy subjects all!
" Fruits of all minds conceived on every coast,
" Fay, witch, enchanter, devil, demon, ghost;
" And thus with knights and nymphs, in halls and bowers,
" In war and love, I pass'd unnumber'd hours:
" Gross and substantial beings all forgot,
" Ideal glories beam'd around the spot,
" And all that was, with me, of this poor world was not.

" Yet in this world there was a single scene,
" That I allow'd with mine to intervene;
" This house, where never yet my feet had stray'd,
" I with respect and timid awe survey'd;
" With pleasing wonder I have oft-times stood,
" To view these turrets rising o'er the wood;
" When Fancy to the halls and chambers flew,
" Large, solemn, silent, that I must not view;
" The moat was then, and then o'er all the ground
" Tall elms and ancient oaks stretch'd far around;
" And where the soil forbade the nobler race,
" Dwarf trees and humbler shrubs had found their place,
" Forbidding man in their close hold to go,
" Haw, gatter, holm, the service and the sloe;
" With tangling weeds that at the bottom grew,
" And climbers all above their feathery branches threw.
" Nor path of man or beast was there espied,
" But there the birds of darkness loved to hide,
" The loathed toad to lodge, and speckled snake to glide.

" To me this hall, thus view'd in part, appear'd
" A mansion vast; I wonder'd, and I fear'd:
" There as I wander'd, Fancy's forming eye
" Could gloomy cells and dungeons dark espy;
" Winding through these, I caught the appalling sound
" Of troubled souls, that guilty minds confound,
" Where Murder made its way, and Mischief stalk'd around.
" Above the roof were raised the midnight storms,
" And the wild lights betray'd the shadowy forms.
" With all these flights and fancies, then so dear,
" I reach'd the birthday of my twentieth year;
" And in the evening of a day in June
" Was singing—as I sang—some heavenly tune;
" My native tone, indeed, was harsh and hoarse,
" But he who feels such powers can sing of course—
" Is there a good on earth, or gift divine,
" That Fancy cannot say, Behold! it is mine?

" So was I singing, when I saw descend,
" From this old seat, a lady and her friend;
" Downward they came with steady pace and slow,
" Arm link'd in arm, to bless my world below.
" I knew not yet if they escaped, or chose
" Their own free way,—if they had friends or foes,—
" But near to my dominion drew the pair,
" Link'd arm in arm, and walk'd conversing there.

" I saw them ere they came, myself unseen,
" My lofty fence and thorny bound between—
" And one alone, one matchless face I saw,
" And, though at distance, felt delight and awe:
" Fancy and truth adorn'd her; fancy gave
" Much, but not all; truth help'd to make their slave!
" For she was lovely, all was not the vain
" Or sickly homage of a fever'd brain!
" No! she had beauty, such as they admire
" Whose hope is earthly, and whose love desire;
" Imagination might her aid bestow,
" But she had charms that only truth could show.

" Their dress was such as well became the place,
" But one superior; hers the air, the grace,
" The condescending looks, that spoke the nobler race.
" Slender she was and tall: her fairy-feet
" Bore her right onward to my shady seat;
" And, Oh! I sigh'd that she would nobly dare
" To come, nor let her friend the adventure share;
" But see how I in my dominion reign,
" And never wish to view the world again.

" Thus was I musing, seeing with my eyes
" These objects, with my mind her fantasies,
" And chiefly thinking—Is this maid, divine
" As she appears, to be this queen of mine?
" Have I from henceforth beauty in my view,
" Not airy all, but tangible and true?
" Here then I fix, here bound my vagrant views,
" And here devote my heart, my time, my Muse.

" She saw not this, though ladies early trace
" Their beauty's power, the glories of their face;
" Yet knew not this fair creature—could not know—
" That new-born love that I too soon must show:
" And I was musing—How shall I begin?
" How make approach my unknown way to win,
" And to that heart, as yet untouch'd, make known
" The wound, the wish, the weakness of my own?
" Such is my part, but——Mercy! what alarm?
" Dare aught on earth that sovereign beauty harm?
" Again—the shrieking charmers—how they rend
" The gentle air——The shriekers lack a friend—
" They are my princess and the attendant maid
" In so much danger, and so much afraid!—
" But whence the terror?—Let me haste and see
" What has befallen them who cannot flee—
" Whence can the peril rise? What can that peril be?

" It soon appear'd that, while this nymph divine
" Moved on, there met her rude uncivil kine,
" Who knew her not—the damsel was not there
" Who kept them, all obedient, in her care;
" Strangers they thus defied and held in scorn,
" And stood in threat'ning posture, hoof and horn;
" While Susan—pail in hand—could stand the while
" And prate with Daniel at a distant stile.

" As feeling prompted, to the place I ran,
" Resolv'd to save the maids and show the man:
" Was each a cow like that which challenged Guy,
" I had resolved to attack it, and defy
" In mortal combat! to repel or die.
" That was no time to parley—or to say
" I will protect you—fly in peace away!
" Lo! yonder stile—but with an air of grace,
" As I supposed, I pointed to the place.

" The fair ones took me at my sign, and flew,
" Each like a dove, and to the stile withdrew,
" Where safe, at distance, and from terrors free,
" They turn'd to view my beastly foes and me.

" I now had time my business to behold,
" And did not like it—let the truth be told:
" The cows, though cowards, yet in numbers strong,
" Like other mobs, by might defended wrong;
" In man's own pathway fix'd, they seem'd disposed
" For hostile measure, and in order closed,
" Then halted near me, as I judged, to treat,
" Before we came to triumph or defeat.

" I was in doubt: 't was sore disgrace, I knew,
" To turn my back and let the cows pursue;
" And should I rashly mortal strife begin,
" 'T was all unknown who might the battle win;
" And yet to wait, and neither fight nor fly,
" Would mirth create—I could not that deny;
" It look'd as if for safety I would treat,
" Nay, sue for peace—No! rather come defeat!
" ' Look to me, loveliest of thy sex! and give
" ' One cheering glance, and not a cow shall live;
" ' For, lo! this iron bar, this strenuous arm,
" ' And those dear eyes to aid me as a charm.'

" Say, goddess! Victory! say, on man or cow
" Meanest thou now to perch?—on neither now—
" For, as I ponder'd, on their way appear'd
" The Amazonian milker of the herd;
" These at the wonted signals made a stand,
" And woo'd the nymph of the relieving hand;
" Nor heeded now the man, who felt relief
" Of other kind, and not unmix'd with grief;
" For now he neither should his courage prove,
" Nor in his dying moments boast his love.

" My sovereign beauty with amazement saw—
" So she declared—the horrid things in awe;
" Well pleased, she witness'd what respect was paid
" By such brute natures:—every cow afraid,
" And kept at distance by the powers of one
" Who had to her a dangerous service done,
" That prudence had declined, that valour's self might shun.

" So thought the maid, who, now beyond stile,
" Received her champion with a gracious smile;
" Who now had leisure on those charms to dwell,
" That he could never from his thoughts expel.
" There are, I know, to whom a lover seems,
" Praising his mistress, to relate his dreams;
" But, Richard, looks like those, that angel-face,
" Could I no more in sister-angel trace;

" Oh! it was more than fancy! it was more,
" Than in my darling views I saw before,
" When I my idol made, and my allegiance swore.

" Henceforth 't was bliss upon that face to dwell,
" Till every trace became indelible;
" I bless'd the cause of that alarm, her fright,
" And all that gave me favour in her sight,
" Who then was kind and grateful, till my mind,
" Pleased and exulting, awe a while resign'd.
" For in the moment when she feels afraid,
" How kindly speaks the condescending maid!
" She sees her danger near, she wants her lover's aid;
" As fire electric, when discharged, will strike
" All who receive it, and they feel alike,
" So in the shock of danger and surprise
" Our minds are struck, and mix, and sympathise.

" But danger dies, and distance comes between
" My state and that of my all-glorious queen;
" Yet much was done—upon my mind a chain
" Was strongly fix'd, and likely to remain:
" Listening, I grew enamour'd of the sound,
" And felt to her my very being bound;
" I bless'd the scene, nor felt a power to move,
" Lost in the ecstasies of infant love.

" She saw, and smiled; the smile delight convey'd,
" My love encouraged, and my act repaid:
" In that same smile I read the charmer meant
" To give her hero chaste encouragement;
" It spoke as plainly as a smile can speak,
" 'Seek whom you love, love freely whom you seek.'

" Thus, when the lovely witch had wrought her charm,
" She took th' attendant maiden by the arm,
" And left me fondly gazing, till no more
" I could the shade of that dear form explore;
" Then to my secret haunt I turn'd again,
" Fire in my heart, and fever in my brain;
" That face of her for ever in my view,
" Whom I was henceforth fated to pursue,
" To hope I knew not what, small hope in what I knew.

" O! my dear Richard, what a waste of time
" Gave I not thus to lunacy sublime;
" What days, months, years (to useful purpose lost),
" Has not this dire infatuation cost!
" To this fair vision I, a bounden slave,
" Time, duty, credit, honour, comfort, gave;
" Gave all—and waited for the glorious things
" That hope expects, but fortune never brings.

" Yet let me own, while I my fault reprove,
" There is one blessing still affix'd to love—
" To love like mine—for as my soul it drew
" From Reason's path, it shunn'd Dishonour's too;
" It made my taste refined, my feelings nice,
" And placed an angel in the way of vice.

" This angel now, whom I no longer view'd,
" Far from this scene her destined way pursued;
" No more that mansion held a form so fair,
" She was away, and beauty was not there.

" Such, my dear Richard, was my early flame,
" My youthful frenzy—give it either name;
" It was the withering bane of many a year,
" That pass'd away in causeless hope and fear;
" The hopes, the fears, that every dream could kill,
" Or make alive, and lead my passive will.

" At length I learnt one name my angel bore,
" And Rosabella I must now adore:
" Yet knew but this—and not the favour'd place
" That held the angel, or th' angelic race;
" Nor where admired, the sweet enchantress dwelt.
" But I had lost her—that, indeed, I felt.

" Yet, would I say, she will at length be mine!
" Did ever hero hope or love resign?
" Though men oppose, and fortune bids despair,
" She will in time her mischief well repair,
" And I, at last, shall wed this fairest of the fair!

" My thrifty uncle, now return'd, began
" To stir within me what remain'd of man;
" My powerful frenzy painted to the life,
" And ask'd me if I took a dream to wife?
" Debate ensued, and, though not well content,
" Upon a visit to his house I went:
" He, the most saving of mankind, had still
" Some kindred feeling; he would guide my will,
" And teach me wisdom—so affection wrought,
" That he to save me from destruction sought:
" To him destruction, the most awful curse
" Of Misery's children, was—an empty purse!
" He his own books approved, and thought the pen
" A useful instrument for trading men;
" But judged a quill was never to be slit
" Except to make it for a merchant fit:
" He, when inform'd how men of taste could write,
" Look'd on his ledger with supreme delight:
" Then would he laugh, and, with insulting joy,
" Tell me aloud, 'That's poetry, my boy!
" 'These are your golden numbers—them repeat;
" 'The more you have, the more you 'll find them sweet;
" 'Their numbers move all hearts—no matter for their feet.
" 'Sir, when a man composes in this style,
" 'What is to him a critic's frown or smile?
" 'What is the puppy's censure or applause
" 'To the good man who on his banker draws,
" 'Buys an estate, and writes upon the grounds,
" '"Pay to A. B. a hundred thousand pounds"?
" 'Thus, my dear nephew, thus your talents prove;
" 'Leave verse to poets, and the poor to love.'

" Some months I suffer'd thus, compell'd to sit
" And hear a wealthy kinsman aim at wit;
" Yet there was something in his nature good,
" And he had feeling for the tie of blood:
" So while I languish'd for my absent maid
" I some observance to my uncle paid."

" Had you inquired?" said Richard.
" I had placed
" Inquirers round, but nothing could be traced;
" Of every reasoning creature at this Hall,
" And tenant near it, I applied to all——

" Tell me if she—and I described her well—
" Dwelt long a guest, or where retired to dwell?
" But no! such lady they remember'd not—
" They saw that face, strange beings! and forgot.

" Nor was inquiry all; but I pursued
" My soul's first wish, with hope's vast strength endued:
" I cross'd the seas, I went where strangers go,
" And gazed on crowds as one who dreads a foe
" Or seeks a friend; and, when I sought in vain,
" Fled to fresh crowds, and hoped and gazed again."

" It was a strong possession."—" Strong and strange;
" I felt the evil, yet desired not change:
" Years now had flown, nor was the passion cured,
" But hope had life, and so was life endured;
" The mind's disease, with all its strength, stole on,
" Till youth, and health, and all but love were gone;
" And there were seasons, Richard, horrid hours
" Of mental suffering! they o'erthrew my powers,
" And made my mind unsteady—I have still,
" At times, a feeling of that nameless ill,
" That is not madness—I could always tell
" My mind was wandering—knew it was not well;
" Felt all my loss of time, the shameful waste
" Of talents perish'd, and of parts disgraced;
" But though my mind was sane, there was a void—
" My understanding seem'd in part destroy'd;
" I thought I was not of my species one,
" But unconnected! injured and undone.

" While in this state, once more my uncle pray'd
" That I would hear—I heard, and I obey'd;
" For I was thankful that a being broke
" On this my sadness, or an interest took
" In my poor life—but, at his mansion, rest
" Came with its halcyon stillness to my breast:
" Slowly there enter'd in my mind concern
" For things about me—I would something learn,
" And to my uncle listen; who, with joy,
" Found that e'en yet I could my powers employ,
" Till I could feel new hopes my mind possess,
" Of ease at least, if not of happiness:
" Till, not contented, not in discontent,
" As my good uncle counsell'd, on I went;
" Conscious of youth's great error—nay, the crime
" Of manhood now—a dreary waste of time!
" Conscious of that account which I must give
" How life had pass'd with me—I strove to live.

" Had I, like others, my first hope attain'd,
" I must, at least, a certainty have gain'd:
" Had I, like others, lost the hope of youth,
" Another hope had promised greater truth;
" But I in baseless hopes, and groundless views,
" Was fated time, and peace, and health to lose;
" Impell'd to seek, for ever doom'd to fail,
" Is——I distress you—let me end my tale.

" Something one day occurr'd about a bill
" That was not drawn with true mercantile skill,
" And I was ask'd and authorised to go
" To seek the firm of Clutterbuck and Co.;
" Their hour was past—but when I urg'd the case,
" There was a youth who named a second place,
" Where, on occasions of important kind,
" I might the man of occupation find
" In his retirement, where he found repose
" From the vexations that in business rose,
" I found, though not with ease, this private seat
" Of soothing quiet, Wisdom's still retreat.

" The house was good, but not so pure and clean
" As I had houses of retirement seen;
" Yet men, I knew, of meditation deep,
" Love not their maidens should their studies sweep.
" His room I saw, and must acknowledge there
" Were not the signs of cleanliness or care:
" A female servant, void of female grace,
" Loose in attire, proceeded to the place;
" She stared intrusive on my slender frame,
" And boldly ask'd my business and my name.

" I gave them both; and, left to be amused,
" Well as I might, the parlour I perused.
" The shutters half unclosed, the curtains fell
" Half down, and rested on the window-sill,
" And thus, confusedly, made the room half visible.
" Late as it was, the little parlour bore
" Some tell-tale tokens of the night before:
" There were strange sights and scents about the room,
" Of food high season'd, and of strong perfume;
" Two unmatch'd sofas ample rents display'd,
" Carpet and curtains were alike decay'd;
" A large old mirror, with once-gilded frame,
" Reflected prints that I forbear to name,
" Such as a youth might purchase—but, in truth,
" Not a sedate or sober-minded youth:
" The cinders yet were sleeping in the grate,
" Warm from the fire, continued large and late,
" As left by careless folk, in their neglected state;
" The chairs in haste seem'd whirl'd about the room,
" As when the sons of riot hurry home,
" And leave the troubled place to solitude and gloom.

" All this, for I had ample time, I saw,
" And prudence question'd—should we not withdraw?
" For he who makes me thus on business wait
" Is not for business in a proper state;
" But man there was not, was not he for whom
" To this convenient lodging I was come;
" No! but a lady's voice was heard to call
" On my attention—and she had it all;
" For, lo! she enters, speaking ere in sight,
" ' Monsieur! I shall not want the chair to-night—
" ' Where shall I see him?'—This dear hour atones
" For all affection's hopeless sighs and groans—
" Then turning to me—' Art thou come at last?
" ' A thousand welcomes—be forgot the past;
" ' Forgotten all the grief that absence brings,
" ' Fear that torments, and jealousy that stings—
" ' All that is cold, injurious, and unkind,
" ' Be it for ever banish'd from the mind;

" ' And in that mind and in that heart be now
" ' The soft endearment and the binding vow.'

" She spoke—and o'er the practised features threw
" The looks that reason charm, and strength subdue.

" Will you not ask how I beheld that face,
" Or read that mind, and read it in that place?
" I have tried, Richard, oft-times, and in vain,
" To trace my thoughts and to review their train—
" If train there were—that meadow, grove, and stile,
" The fright, th' escape, her sweetness and her smile;
" Years since elapsed, and hope, from year to year,
" To find her free—and then to find her here!

" But is it she?—O! yes; the rose is dead,
" All beauty, fragrance, freshness, glory fled:
" But yet 't is she—the same and not the same—
" Who to my bower a heavenly being came;
" Who waked my soul's first thought of real bliss,
" Whom long I sought, and now I find her—this.

" I cannot paint her—something I had seen,
" So pale and slim, and tawdry and unclean;
" With haggard looks, of vice and woe the prey,
" Laughing in languor, miserably gay:
" Her face, where face appear'd, was amply spread,
" By art's coarse pencil, with ill-chosen red,
" The flower's fictitious bloom, the blushing of the dead:
" But still the features were the same, and strange
" My view of both—the sameness and the change,
" That fix'd me gazing and my eye enchain'd,
" Although so little of herself remain'd;
" It is the creature whom I loved, and yet
" Is far unlike her—Would I could forget
" The angel or her fall; the once adored
" Or now despised! the worshipp'd or deplored!

" ' O! Rosabella!' I prepared to say,
" ' Whom I have loved!' but Prudence whisper'd nay,
" And Folly grew ashamed—Discretion had her day.
" She gave her hand, which, as I lightly press'd,
" The cold but ardent grasp my soul oppress'd;
" The ruin'd girl disturb'd me, and my eyes
" Look'd, I conceive, both sorrow and surprise.
" I spoke my business: 'He,' she answer'd, 'comes
" ' And lodges here—he has the backward rooms:
" ' He now is absent, and I chanced to hear
" ' Will not before to-morrow eve appear,
" ' And may be longer absent——O! the night
" ' When you preserved me in that horrid fright!
" ' A thousand, thousand times, asleep, awake,
" ' I thought of what you ventured for my sake—
" ' Now have you thought?—yet tell me so—deceive
" ' Your Rosabella, willing to believe.
" ' O! there is something in love's first-born pain
" ' Sweeter than bliss—it never comes again:
" ' But has your heart been faithful?'—Here my pride,
" To anger rising, her attempt defied:—
" ' My faith must childish in your sight appear,
" ' Who have been faithful—to how many, dear?'

" If words had fail'd, a look explain'd their style;
" She could not blush assent, but she could smile:
" ' Good Heaven!' I thought, ' have I rejected fame,
" ' Credit, and wealth, for one who smiles at shame?'

" She saw me thoughtful—saw it, as I guess'd,
" With some concern, though nothing she express'd.
" ' Come, my dear friend, discard that look of care.
" ' All things were made to be as all things are;
" ' All to seek pleasure as the end design'd,
" ' The only good in matter or in mind;
" ' So I was taught by one who gave me all
" ' That my experienced heart can wisdom call.

" ' I saw thee young, love's soft obedient slave,
" ' And many a sigh to my young lover gave;
" ' And I had, spite of cowardice or cow,
" ' Return'd thy passion, and exchanged my vow:
" ' But while I thought to bait the amorous hook,
" ' One set for me my eager fancy took;
" ' There was a crafty eye, that far could see,
" ' And through my failings fascinated me:
" ' Mine was a childish wish, to please my boy;
" ' His a design, his wishes to enjoy.
" ' O! we have both about the world been toss'd,
" ' Thy gain I know not—I, they cry, am lost:
" ' So let the wise ones talk; they talk in vain,
" ' And are mistaken both in loss and gain;
" ' 'T is gain to get whatever life affords,
" ' 'T is loss to spend our time in empty words.

" ' I was a girl, and thou a boy wert then,
" ' Nor aught of women knew, nor I of men;
" ' But I have traffick'd in the world, and thou,
" ' Doubtless, canst boast of thy experience now;
" ' Let us the knowledge we have gain'd produce,
" ' And kindly turn it to our common use.'

" Thus spoke the siren in voluptuous style,
" While I stood gazing and perplex'd the while,
" Chain'd by that voice, confounded by that smile.
" And then she sang, and changed from grave to gay,
" Till all reproach and anger died away.

" ' My Damon was the first to wake
" ' The gentle flame that cannot die;
" ' My Damon is the last to take
" ' The faithful bosom's softest sigh:
" ' The life between is nothing worth,
" ' O! cast it from thy thought away;
" ' Think of the day that gave it birth,
" ' And this its sweet returning day.

" ' Buried be all that has been done,
" ' Or say that nought is done amiss;
" ' For who the dangerous path can shun
" ' In such bewildering world as this?

" ' But love can every fault forgive,
" ' Or with a tender look reprove;
" ' And now let nought in memory live,
" ' But that we meet, and that we love.'[1]

" And then she moved my pity; for she wept,
" And told her miseries till resentment slept;
" For when she saw she could not reason blind,
" She pour'd her heart's whole sorrows on my mind,
" With features graven on my soul, with sighs
" Seen but not heard, with soft imploring eyes,
" And voice that needed not, but had, the aid
" Of powerful words to soften and persuade.

" ' O! I repent me of the past; and sure
" ' Grief and repentance make the bosom pure;
" ' Yet meet thee not with clean and single heart,
" ' As on the day we met!—and but to part,
" ' Ere I had drunk the cup that to my lip
" ' Was held, and press'd till I was forced to sip:
" ' I drank indeed, but never ceased to hate,—
" ' It poison'd, but could not intoxicate.
" ' T' excuse my fall I plead not love's excess,
" ' But a weak orphan's need and loneliness.
" ' I had no parent upon earth—no door
" ' Was oped to me—young, innocent, and poor,
" ' Vain, tender, and resentful—and my friend
" ' Jealous of one who must on her depend,
" ' Making life misery—You could witness then,
" ' That I was precious in the eyes of men;
" ' So, made by them a goddess, and denied
" ' Respect and notice by the women's pride;
" ' Here scorn'd, there worshipp'd—will it strange appear,
" ' Allured and driven, that I settled here?
" ' Yet loved it not; and never have I pass'd
" ' One day, and wish'd another like the last.

" ' There was a fallen angel, I have read,
" ' For whom their tears the sister-angels shed,
" ' Because, although she ventured to rebel,
" ' She was not minded like a child of hell.—
" ' Such is my lot! and will it not be given
" ' To grief like mine, that I may think of heaven?
" ' Behold how there the glorious creatures shine,
" ' And all my soul to grief and hope resign?

" I wonder'd, doubting—and ' Is this a fact,'
" I thought; ' or part thou art disposed to act?'

" ' Is it not written, He, who came to save
" ' Sinners, the sins of deepest dye forgave?
" ' That He his mercy to the sufferers dealt,
" ' And pardon'd error when the ill was felt?
" ' Yes! I would hope there is an eye that reads
" ' What is within, and sees the heart that bleeds.
" ' But who on earth will one so lost deplore,
" ' And who will help that lost one to restore?
" ' Who will on trust the sigh of grief receive;
" ' And—all things warring with belief—believe?'

" Soften'd, I said, ' Be mine the hand and heart,
" ' If with your world you will consent to part.'
" She would—she tried——Alas! she did not know
" How deeply rooted evil habits grow:
" She felt the truth upon her spirits press,
" But wanted ease, indulgence, show, excess,
" Voluptuous banquets, pleasures—not refined,
" But such as soothe to sleep th' opposing mind;
" She look'd for idle vice, the time to kill,
" And subtle, strong apologies for ill:
" And thus her yielding, unresisting soul
" Sank, and let sin confuse her and control:
" Pleasures that brought disgust yet brought relief,
" And minds she hated, help'd to war with grief."

" Thus then she perish'd?"—
" Nay—but thus she proved
" Slave to the vices that she never loved:
" But while she thus her better thoughts opposed,
" And woo'd the world, the world's deceptions closed.
" I had long lost her; but I sought in vain
" To banish pity:—still she gave me pain,
" Still I desired to aid her—to direct,
" And wished the world, that won her, to reject:
" Nor wish'd in vain—there came, at length, request
" That I would see a wretch with grief oppress'd,
" By guilt affrighted—and I went to trace
" Once more the vice-worn features of that face,
" That sin-wreck'd being! and I saw her laid
" Where never worldly joy a visit paid:
" That world receding fast! the world to come
" Conceal'd in terror, ignorance, and gloom;
" Sins, sorrow, and neglect: with not a spark
" Of vital hope—all horrible and dark.
" It frighten'd me!—I thought, ' And shall not I
" ' Thus feel? thus fear?—this danger can I fly?
" ' Do I so wisely live that I can calmly die?'

" The wants I saw I could supply with ease,
" But there were wants of other kind than these;
" Th' awakening thought, the hope-inspiring view—
" The doctrines awful, grand, alarming, true—
" Most painful to the soul, and yet most healing too:
" Still I could something offer, and could send
" For other aid—a more important friend,
" Whose duty call'd him, and his love no less,
" To help the grieving spirit in distress;
" To save in that sad hour the drooping prey,
" And from its victim drive despair away.

" All decent comfort round the sick were seen;
" The female helpers quiet, sober, clean;
" Her kind physician with a smile appear'd,
" And zealous love the pious friend endear'd;

[1] ["We were lately rash enough to say that we had no poets so unlike as Crabbe and Moore; but poets of their metal can put out critics when they please. This little song is more like Mr. Moore than anything we ever saw under the hand of a professed imitator; and if Mr. Crabbe's amatory propensities continue to increase with his years, as they have done, the bard of Lalla Rookh may still have a formidable rival."—*Edin. Rev.*, 1819.]

" While I, with mix'd sensations, could inquire,
" 'Hast thou one wish, one unfulfill'd desire?
" 'Speak every thought, nor unindulged depart,
" 'If I can make thee happier than thou art.'

" Yes! there was yet a female friend, an old
" And grieving nurse! to whom it should be told—
" If I would tell—that she, her child, had fail'd,
" And turn'd from truth! yet truth at length prevail'd.

" 'T was in that chamber, Richard, I began
" To think more deeply of the end of man:
" Was it to jostle all his fellows by,
" To run before them, and say, 'Here am I;
" 'Fall down, and worship?'—Was it, life throughout,
" With circumspection keen to hunt about,
" As spaniels for their game, where might be found
" Abundance more for coffers that abound?
" Or was it life's enjoyments to prefer,
" Like this poor girl, and then to die like her?
" No! He, who gave the faculties, design'd
" Another use for the immortal mind:
" There is a state in which it will appear
" With all the good and ill contracted here;
" With gain and loss, improvement and defect;
" And then, my soul! what hast thou to expect
" For talents laid aside, life's waste, and time's neglect?

" Still as I went came other change—the frame
" And features wasted, and yet slowly came
" The end; and so inaudible the breath,
" And still the breathing, we exclaim'd—'t is death!
" But death it was not; when, indeed, she died,
" I sat and his last gentle stroke espied:
" When—as it came—or did my fancy trace
" That lively, lovely flushing o'er the face?
" Bringing back all that my young heart impress'd!
" It came—and went!—She sigh'd, and was at rest!

" Adieu, I said, fair Frailty! dearly cost
" The love I bore thee!—time and treasure lost.
" And I have suffer'd many years in vain;
" Now let me something in my sorrows gain:
" Heaven would not all this woe for man intend
" If man's existence with his woe should end;
" Heaven would not pain, and grief, and anguish give,
" If man was not by discipline to live:
" And for that brighter, better world prepare,
" That souls with souls, when purified, shall share,
" Those stains all done away, that must not enter there.

" Home I return'd, with spirits in that state
" Of vacant woe, I strive not to relate,
" Nor how, deprived of all her hope and strength,
" My soul turn'd feebly to the world at length,
" I travell'd then till health again resumed
" Its former seat—I must not say re-bloom'd:
" And then I fill'd, not loth, that favourite place
" That has enrich'd some seniors of our race;
" Patient and dull I grew; my uncle's praise
" Was largely dealt me on my better days;
" A love of money—other love at rest—
" Came creeping on, and settled in my breast;
" The force of habit held me to the oar,
" Till I could relish what I scorn'd before:
" I now could talk and scheme with *men of sense*,
" Who deal for millions, and who sigh for pence;
" And grew so like them, that I heard with joy
" Old Blueskin said I was a pretty boy;
" For I possess'd the caution with the zeal
" That all true lovers of their interest feel:
" Exalted praise! and to the creature due
" Who loves that interest solely to pursue.

" But I was sick, and sickness brought disgust;
" My peace I could not to my profits trust;
" Again some views of brighter kind appear'd,
" My heart was humbled, and my mind was clear'd;
" I felt those helps that souls diseased restore,
" And that cold frenzy, Avarice, raged no more.
" From dreams of boundless wealth I then arose;
" This place, the scene of infant bliss, I chose,
" And here I find relief, and here I seek repose.

" Yet much is lost, and not yet much is found,
" But what remains, I would believe, is sound:
" That first wild passion, that last mean desire,
" Are felt no more: but holier hopes require
" A mind prepared and steady—my reform
" Has fears like his, who, suffering in a storm,
" Is on a rich but unknown country cast,
" The future fearing, while he feels the past;
" But whose more cheerful mind, with hope imbued,
" Sees through receding clouds the rising good." [2]

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[2] [The following lines have been found on a blank leaf of the original MS.:—

" Love!—I have seen a tiger on his prey,
" Savage and fond; its capture his intent:
" Love!—I have seen a sportive lamb at play,
" As mild as pure, as soft as innocent:
" Love!—I have seen a child, who only meant
" A short amusement, trifling for an hour;
" And now a fox, on secret mischief bent,
" And now an owlet, gloating from his bower;
" And watchful in his guilt, and gloomy in his power.

" He comes in every way that men can come,
" And now is garrulous, and now is dumb;
" In some takes instant root, and grows apace,
" In some his progress you can barely trace.
" At first a simple liking, and no more;
" He *sits* considering, 'Do I love or not?'
" He seems a pleasing object to explore,
" As men appear to view a pleasing spot;
" Then forms a wish that Heaven would fix his lot
" In that same place, and then begins regret
" That 't is not so—but may the prize be got?
" Then comes the anxious strife that prize to get,
" And then 't is all he wants, and he must have it yet.
" So then he kneels, and weeps, and begs, and sighs,
" Hangs on the looks, and trembles in the eyes;
" Is all with hope and tenderness possess'd,
" Entirely wretched till supremely bless'd."]

BOOK VIII.

THE SISTERS.

Morning Walk and Conversation—Visit at a Cottage—Characters of the Sisters—Lucy and Jane—Their Lovers—Their Friend the Banker and his Lady—Their Intimacy—Its Consequence—Different Conduct of the Lovers—The Effect upon the Sisters—Their present State—The Influence of their Fortune upon the minds of either.

The morning shone in cloudless beauty bright;
Richard his letters read with much delight;
George from his pillow rose in happy tone,
His bosom's lord sat lightly on his throne:
They read the morning news—they saw the sky
Inviting call'd them, and the earth was dry.

"The day invites us, Brother," said the Squire;
"Come, and I 'll show thee something to admire:
"We still may beauty in our prospects trace;
"If not, we have them in both mind and face.

"'Tis but two miles—to let such women live
"Unseen of him, what reason can I give?
"Why should not Richard to the girls be known?
"Would I have all their friendship for my own?

"Brother, there dwell, yon northern hill below,
"Two favourite maidens, whom 't is good to know:
"Young, but experienced; dwellers in a cot,
"Where they sustain and dignify their lot;
"The best good girls in all our world below—
"O! you must know them—Come! and you shall know.

"But, lo! the morning wastes—here, Jacob, stir—
"If Phœbe comes, do you attend to her;
"And let not Mary get a chattering press
"Of idle girls to hear of her distress;
"Ask her to wait till my return—and hide
"From her meek mind your plenty and your pride;
"Nor vex a creature, humble, sad, and still,
"By your coarse bounty, and your rude good-will."

This said, the Brothers hasten'd on their way,
With all the foretaste of a pleasant day.
The morning purpose in the mind had fix'd
The leading thought, and that with others mix'd.

"How well it is," said George, "when we possess
"The strength that bears us up in our distress;
"And need not the resources of our pride,
"Our fall from greatness and our wants to hide;
"But have the spirit and the wish to show,
"We know our wants as well as others know.
"'Tis true, the rapid turns of fortune's wheel
"Make even the virtuous and the humble feel:
"They for a time must suffer, and but few
"Can bear their sorrows and our pity too.

"Hence all these small expedients, day by day,
"Are used to hide the evils they betray:
"When, if our pity chances to be seen,
"The wounded pride retorts, with anger keen,
"And man's insulted grief takes refuge in his spleen.

"When Timon's board contains a single dish,
"Timon talks much of market-men and fish,
"Forgetful servants, and th' infernal cook,
"Who always spoil'd whate'er she undertook.

"But say, it tries us from our height to fall,
"Yet is not life itself a trial all? [1]
"And not a virtue in the bosom lives,
"That gives such ready pay as patience gives;
"That pure submission to the ruling mind,
"Fix'd, but not forced; obedient, but not blind;
"The will of Heaven to make her own she tries,
"Or makes her own to Heaven a sacrifice.

"And is there aught on earth so rich or rare,
"Whose pleasures may with virtue's pains compare?
"This fruit of patience, this the pure delight,
"That 'tis a trial in her Judge's sight;
"Her part still striving duty to sustain,
"Not spurning pleasure, not defying pain;
"Never in triumph till her race be won,
"And never fainting till her work be done." [2]

With thoughts like these they reach'd the village brook,
And saw a lady sitting with her book;
And so engaged, she heard not till the men
Were at her side, nor was she frighten'd then;
But to her friend, the Squire, his smile return'd,
Through which the latent sadness he discern'd.
The stranger-brother at the cottage door
Was now admitted, and was strange no more:
Then of an absent sister he was told,
Whom they were not at present to behold;
Something was said of nerves, and that disease
Whose varying powers on mind and body seize,
Enfeebling both!—Here chose they to remain
One hour in peace, and then return'd again.
"I know not why," said Richard, "but I feel
"The warmest pity on my bosom steal
"For that dear maid! How well her looks express
"For this world's good a cherish'd hopelessness!
"A resignation that is so entire,
"It feels not new the stirrings of desire;

[Originally:—

"Oh! that we had the virtuous pride to show
"We know ourselves what all about us know;
"Nor, when our board contains a single dish,
"Tell lying tales of market-men and fish!
"We know 't is hard from higher views to fall—
"What is not hard when life is trial all?"]

[1] [Here follows in MS.:—

"But I digress, dear Richard, who despise
"Tellers of tales, who stop and moralize;
"As some good editors of Esop used
"Their privilege, and readers' sense abused;
"Who half a page to write their fable took,
"And just a page and half to swell their book.
"But to that gentle being I return,
"And as I treat of patience, let *me* learn."]

" What now to her is all the world esteems?
" She is awake and cares not for its dreams;
" But moves while yet on earth, as one above
" Its hopes and fears—its loathing and its love.

" But shall I learn," said he, " these sisters' fate?"—
And found his Brother willing to relate.

" The girls were orphans early; yet I saw,
" When young, their father—his profession law;
" He left them but a competence, a store
" That made his daughters neither rich nor poor;
" Not rich, compared with some who dwelt around;
" Not poor, for want they neither fear'd nor found:
" Their guardian uncle was both kind and just,
" One whom a parent might in dying trust;
" Who, in their youth, the trusted store improved,
" And, when he ceased to guide them, fondly loved.
" These sister beauties were in fact the grace
" Of yon small town,—it was their native place;
" Like Saul's famed daughters were the lovely twain,[3]
" As Micah Lucy, and as Merab Jane:[4]
" For this was tall, with free commanding air;
" And that was mild, and delicate, and fair.

" Jane had an arch delusive smile, that charm'd
" And threaten'd too; alluring, it alarm'd;
" The smile of Lucy her approval told,
" Cheerful, not changing; neither kind nor cold.

" When children, Lucy love alone possess'd;
" Jane was more punish'd and was more caress'd:
" If told the childish wishes, one bespoke
" A lamb, a bird, a garden, and a brook;
" The other wish'd a joy unknown, a rout
" Or crowded ball, and to be first led out.

" Lucy loved all that grew upon the ground,
" And loveliness in all things living found;
" The gilded fly, the fern upon the wall,
" Were nature's works, and admirable all;
" Pleased with indulgence of so cheap a kind,
" Its cheapness never discomposed her mind.

" Jane had no liking for such things as these;
" Things pleasing her must her superiors please:
" The costly flower was precious in her eyes,
" That skill can vary, or that money buys;
" Her taste was good, but she was still afraid,
" Till fashion sanction'd the remarks she made.

" The Sisters read, and Jane with some delight,
" The satires keen that fear or rage excite,
" That men in power attack, and ladies high,
" And give broad hints that we may know them by.
" She was amused when sent to haunted rooms,
" Or some dark passage where the spirit comes
" Of one once murder'd: then she laughing read,
" And felt at once the folly and the dread:
" As rustic girls to crafty gipsies fly,
" And trust the liar though they fear the lie;
" Or as a patient, urged by grievous pains,
" Will fee the daring quack whom he disdains;
" So Jane was pleased to see the beckoning hand,
" And trust the magic of the Ratcliffe-wand.

" In her religion—for her mind, though light,
" Was not disposed our better views to slight—
" Her favourite authors were a solemn kind,
" Who fill with dark mysterious thoughts the mind;
" And who with such conceits her fancy plied,
" Became her friend, philosopher, and guide.

" She made the Progress of the Pilgrim one
" To build a thousand pleasant views upon;
" All that connects us with a world above
" She loved to fancy, and she long'd to prove;
" Well would the poet please her who could lead
" Her fancy forth, yet keep untouch'd her creed.

" Led by an early custom, Lucy spied,
" When she awaked, the Bible at her side;
" That, ere she ventured on a world of care,
" She might for trials, joys, or pains prepare,
" For every dart a shield, a guard for every snare.

" She read not much of high heroic deeds,
" Where man the measure of man's power exceeds;
" But gave to luckless love and fate severe
" Her tenderest pity and her softest tear.
" She mix'd not faith with fable, but she trod
" Right onward, cautious in the ways of God;
" Nor did she dare to launch on seas unknown,
" In search of truths by some adventurers shown,
" But her own compass used, and kept a course her own.

" The maidens both their loyalty declared,
" And in the glory of their country shared;
" But Jane that glory felt with proud delight,
" When England's foes were vanquish'd in the fight;
" While Lucy's feelings for the brave who bled
" Put all such glorious triumphs from her head.

" They both were frugal: Lucy from the fear
" Of wasting that which want esteems so dear,

[3] [MS.:—
" Like Saul's fair daughters, as by Cowley sung;
" Not from a monarch, but a yeoman sprung."]

[4] ["Like two bright eyes in a fair body placed,
Saul's royal house two beauteous daughters graced;
Merab the first, Michel the younger named,
Both equally for different glories famed.
Merab with spacious beauty fill'd the sight,
But too much awe chastised the bold delight.
Like a calm sea, which to th' enlarged view
Gives pleasure, but gives fear and reverence too;
Michel's sweet looks clear and free joys did move,
And no less strong, though much more gentle, love," &c.
COWLEY, *Davideis.*]

" But finds so scarce; her sister from the pain
" That springs from want, when treated with disdain.

" Jane borrow'd maxims from a doubting school,
" And took for truth the test of ridicule;
" Lucy saw no such virtue in a jest,
" Truth was with her of ridicule a test.

" They loved each other with the warmth of youth,
" With ardour, candour, tenderness, and truth;
" And though their pleasures were not just the same,
" Yet both were pleased whenever one became;
" Nay, each would rather in the act rejoice
" That was th' adopted, not the native choice.

" Each had a friend, and friends to minds so fond
" And good are soon united in the bond:
" Each had a lover; but it seem'd that fate
" Decreed that these should not approximate.

" Now Lucy's lover was a prudent swain,
" And thought, in all things, what would be his gain;
" The younger sister first engaged his view,
" But with her beauty he her spirit knew:
" Her face he much admired, 'But, put the case,'
" Said he, 'I marry; what is then a face?
" 'At first it pleases to have drawn the lot;
" 'He then forgets it, but his wife does not:
" 'Jane, too,' he judged, 'would be reserved and nice,
" 'And many lovers had enhanced her price.'

" Thus, thinking much, but hiding what he thought,
" The prudent lover Lucy's favour sought,
" And he succeeded,—she was free from art;
" And his appear'd a gentle, guileless heart;
" Such she respected; true, her sister found
" His placid face too ruddy and too round,
" Too cold and inexpressive; such a face
" Where you could nothing mark'd or manly trace.

" But Lucy found him to his mother kind,
" And saw the Christian meekness of his mind;
" His voice was soft, his temper mild and sweet,
" His mind was easy, and his person neat.
" Jane said he wanted courage; Lucy drew
" No ill from that, though she believed it too:
" 'It is religious, Jane; be not severe;'
" 'Well, Lucy, then it is religious fear.'
" Nor could the sister, great as was her love,
" A man so lifeless and so cool approve.

" Jane had a lover, whom a lady's pride
" Might wish to see attending at her side;
" Young, handsome, sprightly, and with good address,
" Not mark'd for folly, error, or excess;
" Yet not entirely from their censure free,
" Who judge our failings with severity;
" The very care he took to keep his name
" Stainless, with some was evidence of shame.

" Jane heard of this, and she replied, 'Enough;
" 'Prove but the facts, and I resist not proof;
" 'Nor is my heart so easy as to love
" 'The man my judgment bids me not approve.'
" But yet that heart a secret joy confess'd,
" To find no slander on the youth would rest;
" His was, in fact, such conduct, that a maid
" Might think of marriage, and be not afraid;
" And she was pleased to find a spirit high,
" Free from all fear, that spurn'd hypocrisy.
" 'What fears my sister?' said the partial fair,
" For Lucy fear'd,—'Why tell me to beware?
" 'No smooth deceitful varnish can I find;
" 'His is a spirit generous, free, and kind;
" 'And all his flaws are seen, all floating in his mind.
" 'A little boldness in his speech. What then?
" 'It is the failing of these generous men.
" 'A little vanity, but—Oh! my dear,
" 'They all would show it, were they all sincere.

" 'But come, agreed; we'll lend each other eyes
" 'To see our favourites, when they wear disguise;
" 'And all those errors that will then be shown
" 'Uninfluenced by the workings of our own.'

" Thus lived the Sisters, far from power removed,
" And far from need, both loving and beloved.
" Thus grew, as myrtles grow: I grieve at heart
" That I have pain and sorrow to impart.[5]
" But so it is, the sweetest herbs that grow
" In the lone vale, where sweetest waters flow,
" Ere drops the blossom, or appears the fruit,
" Feel the vile grub, and perish at the root;
" And in a quick and premature decay,
" Breathe the pure fragrance of their life away.

" A town was near, in which the buildings all
" Were large, but one pre-eminently tall—
" A huge high house. Without there was an air
" Of lavish cost; no littleness was there;
" But room for servants, horses, whiskies, gigs,
" And walls for pines and peaches, grapes and figs:
" Bright on the sloping glass the sunbeams shone,
" And brought the summer of all climates on.

" Here wealth its prowess to the eye display'd,
" And here advanced the seasons, there delay'd,

[5] [Original MS.:—

" Near to the village, where they now abide,
" In their own style—the vulgar called it pride—
" Dwelt the fair sisters: good they were and kind,
" That prying scandal scarce could error find,
" And candour none: they spent, they spared, they gave,
" Just as they ought to give, to spare, to save;
" Like two queen-myrtles in an arbour's side,
" So they abode, and so might still abide,
" But for a blight! it wounds me at the heart,
" That I have grief and anguish to impart," &c.]

" Bid the due heat each growing sweet refine,
" Made the sun's light with grosser fire combine,
" And to the Tropic gave the vigour of the Line.

" Yet, in the master of this wealth, behold
" A light vain coxcomb taken from his gold,
" Whose busy brain was weak, whose boasting heart was cold.

" Oh! how he talk'd to that believing town,
" That he would give it riches and renown;
" Cause a canal where treasures were to swim,
" And they should owe their opulence to him!
" In fact, of riches he ensured a crop,
" So they would give him but a seed to drop.
" As used the alchymist his boasts to make,
" 'I give you millions for the mite I take:'
" The mite they never could again behold,
" The millions all were Eldorado gold.

" By this professing man, the country round
" Was search'd to see where money could be found.

" The thriven farmer, who had lived to spare,
" Became an object of especial care;
" He took the frugal tradesman by the hand,
" And wish'd him joy of what he might command;
" And the industrious servant who had laid
" His saving by, it was his joy to aid;
" Large talk and hints of some productive plan,
" Half named, won all his hearers to a man;
" Uncertain projects drew them wondering on,
" And avarice listen'd till distrust was gone.

" But when to these dear girls he found his way,
" All easy, artless, innocent were they;
" When he compell'd his foolish wife to be
" At once so great, so humble, and so free;
" Whom others sought, nor always with success!
" But they were both her pride and happiness;
" And she esteem'd them, but attended still
" To the vile purpose of her husband's will;
" And when she fix'd his snares about their mind,
" Respected those whom she essay'd to blind:
" Nay, with esteem she some compassion gave
" To the fair victims whom she would not save.
" The Banker's wealth and kindness were her themes,
" His generous plans, his patriotic schemes;
" What he had done for some, a favourite few,
" What for his favourites still he meant to do:
" Not that he always listen'd—which was hard—
" To her, when speaking of her great regard
" For certain friends—' But you, as I may say,
" ' Are his own choice—I am not jealous, nay!'

" Then came the Man himself, and came with speed,
" As just from business of importance freed,
" Or just escaping, came with looks of fire,
" As if he 'd just attain'd his full desire;
" As if Prosperity and he for life
" Were wed, and he was showing off his wife;
" Pleased to display his influence, and to prove
" Himself the object of her partial love:
" Perhaps with this was join'd the latent fear,
" The time would come when he should not be dear.

" Jane laugh'd at all their visits and parade,
" And call'd it friendship in a hothouse made;
" A style of friendship suited to his taste,
" Brought on, and ripen'd like his grapes, in haste;
" She saw the wants that wealth in vain would hide,
" And all the tricks and littleness of pride:
" On all the wealth would creep the vulgar stain,
" And grandeur strove to look itself in vain.

" Lucy perceived—but she replied, ' Why heed
" ' Such small defects?—they 're very kind indeed!'
" And kind they were, and ready to produce
" Their easy friendship, ever fit for use—
" Friendship that enters into all affairs,
" And daily wants, and daily gets, repairs.

" Hence at the cottage of the Sisters stood
" The Banker's steed—he was so very good;
" Oft through the roads, in weather foul or fair,
" Their friend's gay carriage bore the gentle pair:
" His grapes and nectarines woo'd the virgins' hand,
" His books and roses were at their command;
" And costly flowers,—he took upon him shame
" That he could purchase what he could not name.

" Lucy was vex'd to have such favours shown,
" And they returning nothing of their own;
" Jane smiled and begg'd her sister to believe,—
" ' We give at least as much as we receive.'

" Alas! and more: they gave their ears and eyes;
" His splendour ofttimes took them by surprise;
" And if in Jane appear'd a meaning smile,
" She gazed, admired, and paid respect the while.
" Would she had rested there! deluded maid!
" She saw not yet the fatal price she paid;
" Saw not that wealth, though join'd with folly, grew
" In her regard; she smiled, but listen'd too;
" Nay, would be grateful, she would trust her all,
" Her funded source, to him—a matter small;
" Taken for their sole use, and ever at their call—
" To be improved—he knew not how indeed,
" But he had methods—and they must succeed.

" This was so good, that Jane, in very pride,
" To spare him trouble, for a while denied;
" And Lucy's prudence, though it was alarm'd,
" Was by the splendour of the Banker charm'd;
" What was her paltry thousand pounds to him,
" Who would expend five thousand on a whim?
" And then the portion of the wife was known;
" But not that she reserved it for her own.

" Lucy her lover trusted with the fact,
" And frankly ask'd, if he approved the act.
" 'It promised well,' he said; ' he could not tell
" ' How it might end, but sure it promised well;
" ' He had himself a trifle in the Bank,
" ' And should be sore uneasy if it sank.'

" Jane from her lover had no wish to hide
" Her deed, but was withheld by maiden pride;

" To talk so early—as if one were sure
" Of being his! she could not that endure.
" But when the sisters were apart, and when
" They freely spoke of their affairs and men,
" They thought with pleasure of the sum improved,
" And so presented to the men they loved.

" Things now proceeded in a quiet train;
" No cause appear'd to murmur or complain:
" The money'd man, his ever-smiling dame,
" And their young darlings, in their carriage came:
" Jane's sprightly lover smiled their pomp to see,
" And ate their grapes with gratitude and glee,
" But with the freedom there was nothing mean,
" Humble, or forward, in his freedom seen;
" His was the frankness of a mind that shows
" It knows itself, nor fears for what it knows:
" But Lucy's ever humble friend was awed
" By the profusion he could not applaud;
" He seem'd indeed reluctant to partake
" Of the collation that he could not make;
" And this was pleasant in the maiden's view—
" Was modesty—was moderation too;
" Though Jane esteem'd it meanness; and she saw
" Fear in that prudence, avarice in that awe.

" But both the lovers now to town are gone,
" By business one is call'd, by duty one;
" While rumour rises—whether false or true
" The ladies knew not—it was known to few—
" But fear there was, and on their guardian friend
" They for advice and comfort would depend,
" When rose the day; meantime from Belmont-place
" Came vile report, predicting quick disgrace.[6]

" 'Twas told—the servants, who had met to thank
" Their lord for placing money in his Bank—
" Their kind free master, who such wages gave,
" And then increased whatever they could save—
" They who had heard they should their savings lose,
" Were weeping, swearing, drinking at the news;
" And still the more they drank, the more they wept,
" And swore, and rail'd, and threaten'd, till they slept.

" The morning truth confirm'd the evening dread;
" The Bank was broken, and the Banker fled;
" But left a promise that his friends should have,
" To the last shilling—what his fortunes gave.

" The evil tidings reach'd the sister-pair,
" And one like Sorrow look'd, and one Despair:
" They from each other turn'd th' afflicting look,
" And loth and late the painful silence broke.

" 'The odious villain!' Jane in wrath began;
" In pity Lucy, 'The unhappy man!

" 'When time and reason our affliction heal,
" 'How will the author of our sufferings feel?'

" 'And let him feel, my sister,—let the woes
" 'That he creates be bane to his repose!
" 'Let them be felt in his expiring hour,
" 'When death brings all his dread, and sin its power:
" 'Then let the busy foe of mortal state
" 'The pangs he caused, his own to aggravate!
" 'Wretch! when our life was glad, our prospects gay,
" 'With savage hand to sweep them all away!
" 'And he must know it—know when he beguiled
" 'His easy victims—how the villain smiled!

" 'Oh! my dear Lucy, could I see him crave
" 'The food denied, a beggar and a slave,
" 'To stony hearts he should with tears apply,
" 'And Pity's self withhold the struggling sigh;
" 'Or if relenting weakness should extend
" 'Th' extorted scrap that justice would not lend,
" 'Let it be poison'd by the curses deep
" 'Of every wretch whom he compels to weep!'

" 'Nay, my sweet sister, if you thought such pain
" 'Were his, your pity would awake again:
" 'Your generous heart the wretch's grief would feel,
" 'And you would soothe the pangs you could not heal.'

" 'Oh! never, never,—I would still contrive
" 'To keep the slave whom I abhorr'd alive;
" 'His tortured mind with horrid fears to fill,
" 'Disturb his reason, and misguide his will;
" 'Heap coals of fire, to lie like melted lead,
" 'Heavy and hot, on his accursed head;
" 'Not coals that mercy kindles hearts to melt,
" 'But he should feel them hot as fires are felt;
" 'Corroding ever, and through life the same,
" 'Strong self-contempt and ever-burning shame;
" 'Let him so wretched live that he may fly
" 'To desperate thoughts, and be resolved to die—
" 'And then let death such frightful visions give,
" 'That he may dread the attempt, and beg to live!'

" So spake th' indignant maid, when Lucy sigh'd,
" And, waiting softer times, no more replied.

" Barlow was then in town; and there he thought
" Of bliss to come, and bargains to be bought;
" And was returning homeward—when he found
" The Bank was broken, and his venture drown'd.

" 'Ah! foolish maid,' he cried, 'and what wilt thou
" 'Say for thy friends and their excesses now?

[6] [Here follows in the original MS.:—
" Thus fill'd with fear, that evening they attend
" To his last home an ancient village-friend;
" And they, reflecting on the old man's days,
" Who living had their love, and now their praise,
" That good old man, with so much native sense,
" Such health and ease, such hope with competence;
" They could but own, if such should be their lot,
" They should be thankful!—It, alas! was not."]

" ' All now is brought completely to an end:
" ' What can the spendthrift now afford to spend?
" ' Had my advice been—true, I gave consent;
" ' The thing was purposed; what could I prevent?

" ' Who will her idle taste for flowers supply?—
" ' Who send her grapes and peaches? let her try:—
" ' There's none will give her, and she cannot buy.
" ' Yet would she not be grateful if she knew
" ' What to my faith and generous love was due?
" ' Daily to see the man who took her hand,
" ' When she had not a sixpence at command;
" ' Could I be sure that such a quiet mind
" ' Would be for ever grateful, mild, and kind,
" ' I might comply—but how will Bloomer act
" ' When he becomes acquainted with the fact?
" ' The loss to him is trifling—but the fall
" ' From independence, that to her is all:
" ' Now, should he marry, 't will be shame to me
" ' To hold myself from my engagement free;
" ' And should he not, it will be double grace
" ' To stand alone in such a trying case.

" ' Come then, my Lucy, to thy faithful heart
" ' And humble love I will my views impart;
" ' Will see the grateful tear that softly steals
" ' Down thy fair face, and all thy joy reveals;
" ' And when I say it is a blow severe,
" ' Then will I add—Restrain, my love, the tear,
" ' And take this heart, so faithful and so fond,
" ' Still bound to thine—and fear not for that bond.'

" He said; and went with purpose, he believed,
" Of generous nature—so is man deceived.
" Lucy determined that her lover's eye
" Should not distress nor supplication spy—
" That in her manner he should nothing find
" To indicate the weakness of her mind.

" He saw no eye that wept, no frame that shook,
" No fond appeal was made by word or look;
" Kindness there was, but join'd with some restraint,
" And traces of the late event were faint.

" He look'd for grief deploring, but perceives
" No outward token that she longer grieves;
" He had expected for his efforts praise,
" For he resolved the drooping mind to raise;
" She would, he judged, be humble, and afraid
" That he might blame her rashness and upbraid;
" And lo! he finds her in a quiet state,
" Her spirit easy and her air sedate;
" As if her loss was not a cause for pain,
" As if assured that he would make it gain.

" Silent a while, he told the morning news,
" And what he judged they might expect to lose;
" He thought himself, whatever some might boast,
" The composition would be small at most;
" Some shabby matter,—she would see no more
" The tithe of what she held in hand before.

" How did her sister feel? and did she think
" Bloomer was honest, and would never shrink?
" ' But why that smile? is loss like yours so light
" ' That it can aught like merriment excite?
" ' Well, he is rich, we know, and can afford
" ' To please his fancy and to keep his word;
" ' To him 't is nothing; had he now a fear,
" ' He must the meanest of his sex appear;
" ' But the true honour, as I judge the case,
" ' Is both to feel the evil, and embrace.'

" Here Barlow stopp'd, a little vex'd to see
" No fear or hope, no dread or ecstasy:
" Calmly she spoke—' Your prospects, sir, and mine,
" ' Are not the same,—their union I decline;
" ' Could I believe the hand for which you strove
" ' Had yet its value,—did you truly love,—
" ' I had with thanks address'd you, and replied,
" ' Wait till your feelings and my own subside;
" ' Watch your affections, and, if still they live,
" ' What pride denies, my gratitude shall give;
" ' E'en then, in yielding, I had first believed
" ' That I conferr'd the favour, not received.
" ' You I release—nay, hear me—I impart
" ' Joy to your soul,—I judge not of your heart.
" ' Think'st thou a being, to whom God has lent
" ' A feeling mind, will have her bosom rent
" ' By man's reproaches? Sorrow will be thine,
" ' For all thy pity prompts thee to resign!
" ' Think'st thou that meekness' self would condescend
" ' To take the husband when she scorns the friend?
" ' Forgive the frankness, and rejoice for life,
" ' Thou art not burthen'd with so poor a wife.

" ' Go! and be happy—tell, for the applause
" ' Of hearts like thine, we parted; and the cause
" ' Give, as it pleases.' With a foolish look
" That a dull schoolboy fixes on his book
" That he resigns, with mingled shame and joy,
" So Barlow went, confounded like the boy.

" Jane, while she wept to think her sister's pain
" Was thus increased, felt infinite disdain;
" Bound as she was, and wedded by the ties
" Of love and hope, that care and craft despise,
" She could but wonder that a man, whose taste
" And zeal for money had a Jew disgraced,
" Should love her sister; yet with this surprise
" She felt a little exultation rise;
" Hers was a lover who had always held
" This man as base, by generous scorn impell'd;
" And yet as one of whom, for Lucy's sake,
" He would a civil distant notice take.

" Lucy, with sadden'd heart and temper mild,
" Bow'd to correction, like an humbled child
" Who feels the parent's kindness, and who knows
" Such the correction he who loves bestows.

" Attending always, but attending more
" When sorrow ask'd his presence, than before,
" Tender and ardent, with the kindest air,
" Came Bloomer, fortune's error to repair;
" Words sweetly soothing spoke the happy youth,
" With all the tender earnestness of truth.

" There was no doubt of his intention now—
" He will his purpose with his love avow:
" So judged the maid; yet, waiting, she admired
" His still delaying what he most desired;
" Till, from her spirit's agitation free,
" She might determine when the day should be.
" With such facility the partial mind
" Can the best motives for its favourites find.
" Of this he spake not, but he stay'd beyond
" His usual hour—attentive still and fond;—
" The hand yet firmer to the hand he press'd,
" And the eye rested where it loved to rest;
" Then took he certain freedoms, yet so small
" That it was prudish so the things to call;
" Things they were not—' Describe '—that none
can do,
" They had been nothing had they not been new;
" It was the manner and the look; a maid,
" Afraid of such, is foolishly afraid;
" For what could she explain? The piercing eye
" Of jealous fear could nought amiss descry.

" But some concern now rose; the youth would
seek
" Jane by herself, and then would nothing speak,
" Before not spoken; there was still delay,
" Vexatious, wearying, wasting, day by day.

" ' He does not surely trifle!' Heaven forbid!
" She now should doubly scorn him if he did.

" Ah! more than this, unlucky girl! is thine;
" Thou must the fondest views of life resign;
" And in the very time resign them too,
" When they were brightening on the eager view.
" I will be brief,—nor have I heart to dwell
" On crimes they almost share who paint them
well.

" There was a moment's softness, and it seem'd
" Discretion slept, or so the lover dream'd;
" And watching long the now confiding maid,
" He though her guardless, and grew less afraid;
" Led to the theme that he had shunn'd before,
" He used a language he must use no more—
" For if it answers, there is no more need,
" And no more trial should it not succeed.

" Then made he that attempt, in which to fail
" Is shameful,—still more shameful to prevail.

" Then was there lightning in that eye that shed
" Its beams upon him,—and his frenzy fled;
" Abject and trembling at her feet he laid,
" Despised and scorn'd by the indignant maid,
" Whose spirits in their agitation rose,
" Him, and her own weak pity, to oppose:
" As liquid silver in the tube mounts high,
" Then shakes and settles as the storm goes by.

" While yet the lover stay'd, the maid was
strong,
" But when he fled, she droop'd and felt the
wrong—
" Felt the alarming chill, th' enfeebled breath,
" Closed the quick eye, and sank in transient
death.

" So Lucy found her; and then first that breast
" Knew anger's power, and own'd the stranger
guest.

" ' And is this love? Ungenerous! Has he too
" ' Been mean and abject? Is no being true?'
" For Lucy judged that, like her prudent swain,
" Bloomer had talk'd of what a man might gain;
" She did not think a man on earth was found,
" A wounded bosom, while it bleeds, to wound;
" Thought not that mortal could be so unjust
" As to deprive affliction of its trust;
" Thought not a lover could the hope enjoy,
" That must the peace, he should promote, de-
stroy;
" Thought not, in fact, that in the world were
those
" Who to their tenderest friends are worse than
foes,
" Who win the heart, deprive it of its care,
" Then plant remorse and desolation there.

" Ah! cruel he who can that heart deprive
" Of all that keeps its energy alive;
" Can see consign'd to shame the trusting fair,
" And turn confiding fondness to despair;
" To watch that time—a name is not assign'd
" For crime so odious, nor shall learning find.

" Now, from that day, has Lucy laid aside
" Her proper cares, to be her sister's guide,
" Guard, and protector. At their uncle's farm
" They pass'd the period of their first alarm,
" But soon retired, nor was he grieved to learn
" They made their own affairs their own concern.

" I knew not then their worth; and, had I
known,
" Could not the kindness of a friend have shown;
" For men they dreaded:—they a dwelling sought,
" And there the children of the village taught;
" There, firm and patient, Lucy still depends
" Upon her efforts, not upon her friends;
" She is with persevering strength endued,
" And can be cheerful—for she will be good.

" Jane too will strive the daily tasks to share,
" That so employment may contend with care:
" Not power, but will, she shows, and looks about
" On her small people, who come in and out;
" And seems of what they need, or she can do, in
doubt.

" There sits the chubby crew on seats around,
" While she, all rueful at the sight and sound,
" Shrinks from the free approaches of the tribe,
" Whom she attempts lamenting to describe,
" With stains the idlers gather'd in their way,
" The simple stains of mud, and mould, and clay,
" And compound of the streets, of what we dare
not say;
" With hair uncomb'd, grimed face, and piteous
look,
" Each heavy student takes the odious book,
" And on the lady casts a glance of fear,
" Who draws the garment close as he comes near;
" She then for Lucy's mild forbearance tries,
" And from her pupils turns her brilliant eyes,

" Making new efforts, and with some success,
" To pay attention while the students guess;
" Who to the gentler mistress fain would glide
" And dread their station at the lady's side.

" Such is their fate:—there is a friendly few
" Whom they receive, and there is chance for you;
" Their school, and something gather'd from the wreck
" Of that bad Bank, keeps poverty in check;
" And true respect and high regard are theirs,
" The children's profit, and the parents' prayers.

" With Lucy rests the one peculiar care,
" That few must see, and none with her may share;
" More dear than hope can be, more sweet than pleasures are.
" For her sad sister needs the care of love,
" That will direct her, that will not reprove,
" But waits to warn; for Jane will walk alone,
" Will sing in low and melancholy tone;
" Will read or write, or to her plants will run
" To shun her friends,—alas! her thoughts to shun.

" It is not love alone disturbs her rest,
" But loss of all that ever hope possess'd;
" Friends ever kind, life's lively pleasures, ease,
" When her enjoyments could no longer please—
" These were her comforts then! she has no more of these.

" Wrapt in such thoughts, she feels her mind astray,
" But knows 't is true that she has lost her way;
" For Lucy's smile will check the sudden flight,
" And one kind look let in the wonted light.

" Fits of long silence she endures, then talks
" Too much—with too much ardour, as she walks;
" But still the shrubs that she admires dispense
" Their balmy freshness to the hurried sense,
" And she will watch their progress, and attend
" Her flowering favourites as a guardian friend;
" To sun or shade she will her sweets remove,
" ' And here,' she says, 'I may with safety love.'

" But there are hours when on that bosom steals
" A rising terror,—then indeed she feels;—
" Feels how she loved the promised good, and how
" She feels the failure of the promise now.

" ' That other spoiler did as robbers do,
" ' Made poor our state, but not disgraceful too.
" ' This spoiler shames me, and I look within
" ' To find some cause that drew him on to sin;
" ' He and the wretch who could thy worth forsake
" ' Are the fork'd adder and the loathsome snake;
" ' Thy snake could slip in villain-fear away,
" ' But had no fang to fasten on his prey.

" ' Oh! my dear Lucy, I had thought to live
" ' With all the comforts easy fortunes give;
" ' A wife caressing and caress'd—a friend,
" ' Whom we would guide, advise, consult, defend,
" ' And make his equal;—then I fondly thought
" ' Among superior creatures to be brought;
" ' And while with them, delighted to behold
" ' No eye averted, and no bosom cold;—
" ' Then at my home, a mother, to embrace
" ' My——Oh! my sister, it was surely base!
" ' I might forget the wrong; I cannot the disgrace.

" ' Oh! when I saw that triumph in his eyes,
" ' I felt my spirits with his own arise;
" ' I call'd it joy, and said, The generous youth
" ' Laughs at my loss—no trial for his truth;
" ' It is a trifle he can not lament,
" ' A sum but equal to his annual rent;
" ' And yet that loss, the cause of every ill,
" ' Has made me poor, and him'——

" ' Oh! poorer still;
" ' Poorer, my Jane, and far below thee now:
" ' The injurer he,—the injured sufferer thou;
" ' And shall such loss afflict thee?'—

" ' Lose I not
" ' With him what fortune could in life allot?
" ' Lose I not hope, life's cordial, and the views
" ' Of an aspiring spirit?—O! I lose
" ' Whate'er the happy feel, whate'er the sanguine choose.
" ' Would I could lose this bitter sense of wrong,
" ' And sleep in peace!—but it will not be long!
" ' And here is something, Lucy, in my brain,
" ' I know not what—it is a cure for pain,
" ' But is not death!—no beckoning hand I see,
" ' No voice I hear, that comes alone to me;
" ' It is not death, but change; I am not now
" ' As I was once,—nor can I tell you how;
" ' Nor is it madness; ask, and you shall find
" ' In my replies the soundness of my mind:
" ' O! I should be a trouble all day long—
" ' A very torment—if my head were wrong!'

" At times there is upon her features seen,
" What moves suspicion—she is too serene.
" Such is the motion of a drunken man,
" Who steps sedately, just to show he can.
" Absent at times, she will her mother call,
" And cry at mid-day, 'Then good night to all.'

" But most she thinks there will some good ensue
" From something done, or what she is to do;
" Long wrapt in silence, she will then assume
" An air of business, and shake off her gloom;
" Then cry exulting, ' O! it must succeed,
" ' There are ten thousand readers—all men read:
" ' There are my writings,—you shall never spend
" ' Your precious moments to so poor an end;
" ' Our peasants' children may be taught by those
" ' Who have no powers such wonders to compose;
" ' So let me call them,—what the world allows,
" ' Surely a poet without shame avows.
" ' Come, let us count what numbers we believe
" ' Will buy our work—Ah! sister, do you grieve?
" ' You weep; there 's something I have said amiss,
" ' And vex'd my sister—What a world is this!
" ' And how I wander!—Where has fancy run?
" ' Is there no poem? Have I nothing done?

" 'Forgive me, Lucy; I had fix'd my eye,
" 'And so my mind, on works that cannot die—
" '*Marmion* and *Lara* yonder in the case;
" 'And so I put me in the poet's place.

" 'Still, be not frighten'd; it is but a dream;
" 'I am not lost, bewilder'd, though I seem;
" 'I will obey thee—but suppress thy fear—
" 'I am at ease,—then why that silly tear?'[7]

" Jane, as these melancholy fits invade
" The busy fancy, seeks the deepest shade;
" She walks in ceaseless hurry, till her mind
" Will short repose in verse and music find;
" Then her own songs to some soft tunes she sings,
" And laughs, and calls them melancholy things;
" Not frenzy all; in some her erring Muse
" Will sad, afflicting, tender strains infuse:
" Sometimes on death she will her lines compose,
" Or give her serious page of solemn prose;
" And still those favourite plants her fancy please,
" And give to care and anguish rest and ease.

" 'Let me not have this gloomy view
" 'About my room, around my bed;
" 'But morning roses, wet with dew,
" 'To cool my burning brows instead.
" 'As flow'rs that once in Eden grew,
" 'Let them their fragrant spirits shed,
" 'And every day the sweets renew,
" 'Till I, a fading flower, am dead.

" 'Oh! let the herbs I loved to rear
" 'Give to my sense their perfumed breath;
" 'Let them be placed about my bier,
" 'And grace the gloomy house of death.
" 'I 'll have my grave beneath a hill,
" 'Where, only Lucy's self shall know;
" 'Where runs the pure pellucid rill
" 'Upon its gravelly bed below;
" 'There violets on the borders blow,
" 'And insects their soft light display,
" 'Till, as the morning sunbeams glow,
" 'The cold phosphoric fires decay.

" 'That is the grave to Lucy shown,
" 'The soil a pure and silver sand,
" 'The green cold moss above it grown,
" 'Unpluck'd of all but maiden hand:
" 'In virgin earth, till then unturn'd,
" 'There let my maiden form be laid,
" 'Nor let my changed clay be spurn'd,
" 'Nor for new guest that bed be made.

" 'There will the lark,—the lamb, in sport,
" 'In air,—on earth,—securely play,
" 'And Lucy to my grave resort,
" 'As innocent, but not so gay.
" 'I will not have the churchyard ground,
" 'With bones all black and ugly grown,
" To press my shivering body round,
" 'Or on my wasted limbs be thrown.

" With ribs and skulls I will not sleep,
" 'In clammy beds of cold blue clay,
" 'Through which the ringed earth-worms creep,
" 'And on the shrouded bosom prey;
" 'I will not have the bell proclaim
" 'When those sad marriage rites begin,
" 'And boys, without regard or shame,
" 'Press the vile mouldering masses in.

" 'Say not, it is beneath my care;
" 'I cannot these cold truths allow;
" 'These thoughts may not afflict me there,
" 'But, O! they vex and tease me now.
" 'Raise not a turf, nor set a stone,
" 'That man a maiden's grave may trace,
" 'But thou, my Lucy, come alone,
" 'And let affection find the place.

" 'Oh! take me from a world I hate,
" 'Men cruel, selfish, sensual, cold;
" 'And, in some pure and blessed state,
" 'Let me my sister minds behold:
" 'From gross and sordid views refined,
" 'Our heaven of spotless love to share,
" 'For only generous souls design'd,
" 'And not a man to meet us there.'"[8]

BOOK IX.

THE PRECEPTOR HUSBAND.

The Morning Ride—Conversation—Character of one whom they meet—His early Habits and Mode of Thinking—The Wife whom he would choose—The one chosen—His Attempts to teach—In History—In Botany—The Lady's Proficiency—His Complaint—Her Defence and Triumph—The Trial ends.

" Whom pass'd we musing near the woodman's shed,
" Whose horse not only carried him, but led,
" That his grave rider might have slept the time,
" Or solved a problem, or composed a rhyme?

[7] [Here follows in MS.:—
" I read your looks, my Brother; you would give
" Largely to these—they should in comfort live,
" Nor labour thus; but you would find it hard
" To gain assent: professions they regard
" As their experience bids them, and they run
" From ready love, as they would treachery shun;
" Yet have I woo'd them long, and they attend
" With growing trust—they treat me as a friend,
" And talk of my probation; but afraid,
" They take my counsel, but refuse my aid.
" Jane," &c.]

[8] ["The characters of the two Sisters are drawn with infinite skill and minuteness, and their whole story narrated with great feeling and beauty. The effects of their trials on their different tempers are also very finely described. The gentler Lucy is the most resigned and magnanimous. The more aspiring Jane suffers far keener anguish and fiercer impatience; and the task of soothing and cheering her devolves on her generous sister. The wanderings of her reason are represented in a very affecting manner. The concluding stanzas appear to us to be eminently beautiful, and make us regret that Mr. Crabbe should have indulged us so seldom with those higher lyrical effusions."—JEFFREY.]

Drawn by R. Westall, R.A. Engraved by Chas. Heath.

TALES OF THE HALL.

'AND WOULD THE BUTLER AND THE COOK SURPRISE,
'WHO LISTEN'D TO HIS LATIN EXERCISE.'

Book IX.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET. 1850.

" A more abstracted man within my view
" Has never come—He recollected you."

" Yes, he was thoughtful—thinks the whole day long,
" Deeply, and chiefly that he once thought wrong;
" He thought a strong and kindred mind to trace
" In the soft outlines of a trifler's face.

" Poor Finch! I knew him when at school,—a boy
" Who might be said his labours to enjoy;
" So young a pedant that he always took
" The girl to dance who most admired her book;
" And would the butler and the cook surprise,
" Who listen'd to his Latin exercise;
" The matron's self the praise of Finch avow'd,
" He was so serious, and he read so loud;
" But yet, with all this folly and conceit,
" The lines he wrote were elegant and neat;
" And early promise in his mind appear'd
" Of noble efforts when by reason clear'd.

" And when he spoke of wives, the boy would say,
" His should be skill'd in Greek and algebra;
" For who would talk with one to whom his themes,
" And favourite studies, were no more than dreams?
" For this, though courteous, gentle, and humane,
" The boys contemn'd and hated him as vain,
" Stiff, and pedantic."—

" Did the man enjoy,
" In after life, the visions of the boy?"

" At least they form'd his wishes, they were yet
" The favourite views on which his mind was set:
" He quaintly said, how happy must they prove,
" Who, loving, study—or who, studious, love;
" Who feel their minds with sciences imbued,
" And their warm hearts by beauty's force subdued!

" His widow'd mother, who the world had seen,
" And better judge of either sex had been,
" Told him that just as their affairs were placed,
" In some respects he must forego his taste;
" That every beauty, both of form and mind,
" Must be by him, if unendow'd, resign'd;
" That wealth was wanted for their joint affairs;
" His sisters' portions, and the Hall's repairs.

" The son assented—and the wife must bring
" Wealth, learning, beauty, ere he gave the ring;
" But as these merits, when they all unite,
" Are not produced in every soil and site;
" And when produced are not the certain gain
" Of him who would these precious things obtain;
" Our patient student waited many a year,
" Nor saw this phœnix in his walks appear.
" But as views mended in the joint estate,
" He would a something in his points abate;
" Give him but learning, beauty, temper, sense,
" And he would then the happy state commence.
" The mother sigh'd, but she at last agreed,
" And now the son was likely to succeed;

" Wealth is substantial good the fates allot,
" We know we have it, or we have it not;
" But all those graces, which men highly rate,
" Their minds themselves imagine and create;
" And therefore Finch was in a way to find
" A good that much depended on his mind.

" He look'd around, observing, till he saw
" Augusta Dallas! when he felt an awe
" Of so much beauty and commanding grace,
" That well became the honours of her race.

" This lady never boasted of the trash
" That commerce brings: she never spoke of cash;
" The gentle blood that ran in every vein
" At all such notions blush'd in pure disdain.

" Wealth once relinquish'd, there was all beside,
" As Finch believed, that could adorn a bride;
" He could not gaze upon the form and air
" Without concluding all was right and fair;
" Her mild but dignified reserve suppress'd
" All free inquiry—but his mind could rest,
" Assured that all was well, and in that view was bless'd.

" And now he ask'd, 'Am I the happy man
" 'Who can deserve her? is there one who ca?'
" His mother told him he possess'd the land
" That puts a man in heart to ask a hand;
" All who possess it feel they bear about
" A spell that puts a speedy end to doubt;
" But Finch was modest—'May it then be thought
" 'That she can so be gain'd?'—'She may be sought.'
" 'Can love with land be won?'—'By land is beauty bought.
" 'Do not, dear Charles, with indignation glow;
" 'All value that the want of which they know;
" 'Nor do I blame her; none that worth denies:
" 'But can my son be sure of what he buys?
" 'Beauty she has, but with it can you find
" 'The inquiring spirit, or the studious mind?
" 'This wilt thou need who art to thinking prone,
" 'And minds unpair'd had better think alone;
" 'Then how unhappy will the husband be
" 'Whose sole associate spoils his company!'

" This he would try; but all such trials prove
" Too mighty for a man disposed to love;
" He whom the magic of a face enchains,
" But little knowledge of the mind obtains;
" If by his tender heart the man is led,
" He finds how erring is the soundest head.

" The lady saw his purpose; she could meet
" The man's inquiry, and his aim defeat;
" She had a studied flattery in her look,
" She could be seen retiring with a book;
" She by attending to his speech could prove
" That she for learning had a fervent love;
" Yet love alone, she modestly declared,
" She must be spared inquiry, and was spared;
" Of her poor studies she was not so weak,
" As in his presence, or at all, to speak;
" But to discourse with him, who, all agreed,
" Has read so much, would be absurd indeed;

" Ask what he might, she was so much a dunce
" She would confess her ignorance at once.

" All this the man believed not,—doom'd to grieve
" For his belief, he this would not believe:
" No! he was quite in raptures to discern
" That love and that avidity to learn.
" 'Could she have found,' she said, 'a friend, a guide,
" 'Like him, to study had been all her pride;
" 'But, doom'd so long to frivolous employ,
" 'How could she those superior views enjoy?
" 'The day might come—a happy day for her—
" 'When she might choose the ways she should prefer.'

" Then too he learn'd, in accidental way,
" How much she griev'd to lose the given day
" In dissipation wild, in visitation gay.
" Happy, most happy, must the woman prove
" Who proudly looks on him she vows to love;
" Who can her humble acquisitions state,
" That he will praise, at least will tolerate.

" Still the cool mother sundry doubts express'd,—
" 'How! is Augusta graver than than the rest?
" 'There are three others: they are not inclined
" 'To feed with precious food the empty mind:
" 'Whence this strong relish?' 'It is very strong,'
" Replied the son, 'and has possess'd her long.
" 'Increased indeed, I may presume, by views,—
" 'We may suppose—ah! may she not refuse?'

" 'Fear not!—I see the question must be tried,
" 'Nay, is determined—let us to your Bride.'

" They soon were wedded, and the Nymph appear'd
" By all her promised excellence endear'd:
" Her words were kind, were cautious, and were few,
" And she was proud—of what her husband knew.
" Weeks pass'd away, some five or six, before,
" Bless'd in the present, Finch could think of more:
" A month was next upon a journey spent,
" When to the Lakes the fond companions went;
" Then the gay town received them, and, at last,
" Home to their mansion man and wife they pass'd.[1]

" And now in quiet way they came to live
" On what their fortune, love, and hopes would give;
" The honey'd moon had nought but silver rays,
" And shone benignly on their early days;
" The second moon a light less vivid shed,
" And now the silver rays were tinged with lead.
" They now began to look beyond the Hall,
" And think what friends would make a morning call:

" Their former appetites return'd, and now
" Both could their wishes and their tastes avow;
" 'T was now no longer 'Just what you approve,'
" But 'Let the wild fowl be to-day, my love.'
" In fact the senses, drawn aside by force
" Of a strong passion, sought their usual course.

" Now to her music would the wife repair,
" To which he listen'd once with eager air;
" When there was so much harmony within,
" That any note was sure its way to win:
" But now the sweet melodious tones were sent
" From the struck chords, and none cared where they went.
" Full well we know that many a favourite air,
" That charms a party, fails to charm a pair;[2]
" And as Augusta play'd, she look'd around
" To see if one was dying at the sound:
" But all were gone—a husband, wrapt in gloom,
" Stalk'd careless, listless, up and down the room.

" And now 't is time to fill that ductile mind
" With knowledge, from his stores of various kind:
" His mother, in a peevish mood, had ask'd,
" 'Does your Augusta profit? is she task'd?'

" 'Madam!' he cried, offended with her looks,
" 'There's time for all things, and not all for books;
" 'Just on one's marriage to sit down, and prate
" 'On points of learning, is a thing I hate.'

" '"T is right, my son, and it appears to me,
" 'If deep your hatred, you must well agree.'

" Finch was too angry for a man so wise,
" And said, 'Insinuation I despise!
" 'Nor do I wish to have a mind so full
" 'Of learned trash—it makes a woman dull:
" 'Let it suffice that I in her discern
" 'An aptitude and a desire to learn.'

" The matron smiled, but she observed a frown
" On her son's brow, and calmly sat her down;
" Leaving the truth to Time, who solves our doubt,
" By bringing his all-glorious daughter out—
" Truth! for whose beauty all their love profess,
" And yet how many think it ugliness!

" 'Augusta, love,' said Finch, "while you engage
" 'In that embroidery, let me read a page;
" 'Suppose it Hume's: indeed he takes a side,
" 'But still an author need not be our guide;
" 'And as he writes with elegance and ease,
" 'Do now attend—he will be sure to please.
" 'Here at the Revolution we commence,—
" 'We date, you know, our liberties from hence.'

" 'Yes, sure,' Augusta answer'd with a smile,
" 'Our teacher always talk'd about his style,
" 'When we about the Revolution read,
" 'And how the Martyrs to the flames were led;

[1] [Thus in the original MS.:—
" The weeks fled smoothly, five or six, before,
" Bless'd in the present, he could think of more;
" Two months beside were at his villa spent,
" Where first enraptured, he became content;
" Then went to town, scarce knowing why he went.
" His lady with him, as a wife should be—
" Talk of a moon of honey! there were three."]

[2] [MS.:—
" For pairs not loving cannot music find,
" And loving pairs have music in the mind."]

" ' The good old Bishops, I forget their names,
" ' But they were all committed to the flames;
" ' Maidens and widows, bachelors and wives,—
" ' The very babes and sucklings lost their lives.
" ' I read it all in Guthrie at the school,—
" ' What now!—I know you took me for a fool;
" ' There were five Bishops taken from the stall,
" ' And twenty widows—I remember all;
" ' And by this token, that our teacher tried
" ' To cry for pity, till she howl'd and cried.'

" ' True, true, my love, but you mistake the thing,—
" ' The Revolution that made William king
" ' Is what I mean; the Reformation you,
" ' In Edward and Elizabeth,'—' 'T is true:
" ' But the nice reading is the love between
" ' The brave lord Essex and the cruel queen;
" ' And how he sent the ring to save his head,
" ' Which the false lady kept till he was dead.

" ' That is all true: now read, and I 'll attend:
" ' But was not she a most deceitful friend?
" ' It was a monstrous, vile, and treacherous thing,
" ' To show no pity and to keep the ring;
" ' But the queen shook her in her dying bed,
" ' And "God forgive you!" was the word she said;
" ' "Not I for certain"——Come, I will attend;
" ' So read the Revolutions to an end.'

" Finch, with a timid, strange, inquiring look,
" Softly and slowly laid aside the book
" With sigh inaudible——' Come, never heed,'
" Said he, recovering, ' now I cannot read.'

" They walk'd at leisure through their wood and groves,
" In fields and lanes, and talk'd of plants and loves,
" And loves of plants.—Said Finch, ' Augusta dear,
" ' You said you loved to learn,—were you sincere?
" ' Do you remember that you told me once
" ' How much you grieved, and said you were a dunce?
" ' That is, you wanted information. Say,
" ' What would you learn? I will direct your way.'

" ' Goodness!' said she, ' what meanings you discern
" ' In a few words! I said I wish'd to learn,
" ' And so I think I did; and you replied,
" ' The wish was good: what would you now beside?
" ' Did not you say it show'd an ardent mind?
" ' And pray what more do you expect to find?'

" ' My dear Augusta, could you wish indeed
" ' For any knowledge, and not then proceed?
" ' That is not wishing.'——
" ' Mercy! how you teaze!
" ' You knew I said it with a view to please!
" ' A compliment to you, and quite enough,—
" ' You would not kill me with that puzzling stuff?
" ' Sure I might say I wish'd: but that is still
" ' Far from a promise; it is not—" I will."

" ' But come; to show you that I will not hide
" ' My proper talents, you shall be my guide;
" ' And Lady Boothby, when we meet, shall cry,
" ' " She 's quite as good a botanist as I." '

" ' Right, my Augusta.' And in manner grave
" Finch his first lecture on the science gave—
" An introduction;—and he said, ' My dear,
" ' Your thought was happy,—let us persevere;
" ' And let no trifling cause our work retard.'
" Agreed the lady, but she fear'd it hard.

" Now o'er the grounds they rambled many a mile;
" He show'd the flowers, the stamina, the style,
" Calix and corol, pericarp and fruit,
" And all the plant produces, branch and root:
" Of these he treated, every varying shape,
" Till poor Augusta panted to escape:
" He show'd the various foliage plants produce,
" Lunate and lyrate, runcinate, retuse;
" Long were the learned words, and urged with force,
" Panduriform, pinnatifid, premorse,
" Latent, and patent, papulous, and plane.—
" ' Oh!' said the pupil, ' it will turn my brain.'
" ' Fear not,' he answer'd, and again, intent
" To fill that mind, o'er class and order went;
" And stopping, ' Now,' said he, ' My love attend.'
" ' I do,' said she, ' but when will be an end?'
" ' When we have made some progress:—now begin,—
" ' Which is the stigma? show me with a pin:
" ' Come, I have told you, dearest—let me see—
" ' Times very many; tell it now to me.'

" ' Stigma! I know,—the things with yellow heads,
" ' That shed the dust, and grow upon the threads;
" ' You call them wives and husbands, but you know'
" ' That is a joke—here, look, and I will show
" ' All I remember.'—Doleful was the look
" Of the preceptor, when he shut his book,
" (The system brought to aid them in their view,)
" And now with sighs return'd, ' It will not do.'

" A handsome face first led him to suppose
" There must be talent with such looks as those;
" The want of talent taught him now to find
" The face less handsome with so poor a mind;
" And half the beauty faded, when he found
" His cherish'd hopes were falling to the ground.

" Finch lost his spirit, but e'en then he sought
" For fancied powers: she might in time be taught.
" Sure there was nothing in that mind to fear;
" The favourite study did not yet appear.

" Once he express'd a doubt if she could look
" For five succeeding minutes on a book;
" When, with awaken'd spirit, she replied,
" ' He was mistaken, and she would be tried.'

" With this delighted, he new hopes express'd,—
" ' How do I know?—She may abide the test?
" ' Men I have known, and famous in their day,
" ' Who were by chance directed in their way:
" ' I have been hasty.—Well, Augusta, well,
" ' What is your favourite reading? prithee tell;

" ' Our different tastes may different books require,—
" ' Yours I may not peruse, and yet admire:
" ' Do then explain.'—' Good Heaven!' said she, in haste,
" ' How I do hate these lectures upon taste!'
" ' I lecture not, my love; but do declare—
" ' You read you say—what your attainments are.'

" ' Oh! you believe,' said she, ' that other things
" ' Are read as well as histories of kings,
" ' And loves of plants, with all that simple stuff
" ' About their sex, of which I know enough.

" ' Well, if I must, I will my studies name;
" ' Blame if you please—I know you love to blame.
" ' When all our childish books were set apart,
" ' The first I read was "Wanderings of the Heart:"
" ' It was a story, where was done a deed
" ' So dreadful, that alone I fear'd to read.

" ' The next was "The Confessions of a Nun,"—
" ' 'T was quite a shame such evil should be done;
" ' Nun of—no matter for the creature's name,
" ' For there are girls no nunnery can tame:
" ' Then was the story of the Haunted Hall,
" ' Where the huge picture nodded from the wall,
" ' When the old lord look'd up with trembling dread,
" ' And I grew pale, and shudder'd as I read:
" ' Then came the tales of Winters, Summers, Springs,
" ' At Bath and Brighton,—they were pretty things!
" ' No ghosts nor spectres there were heard or seen,
" ' But all was love and flight to Gretna Green.
" ' Perhaps your greater learning may despise
" ' What others like, and there your wisdom lies.
" ' Well! do not frown,—I read the tender tales
" ' Of lonely cots, retreats in silent vales
" ' For maids forsaken and suspected wives,
" ' Against whose peace some foe his plot contrives,
" ' With all the hidden schemes that none can clear
" ' Till the last book, and then the ghosts appear.

" ' I read all plays that on the boards succeed,
" ' And all the works that ladies ever read,—
" ' Shakspeare, and all the rest,—I did, indeed.
" ' Ay! you may stare; but, sir, believe it true
" ' That we can read and learn as well as you.

" ' I would not boast,—but I could act a scene
" ' In any play, before I was fifteen.

" ' Nor is this all; for many are the times
" ' I read in Pope and Milton, prose and rhymes;
" ' They were our lessons, and, at ten years old,
" ' I could repeat——but now enough is told.
" ' Sir, I can tell you I my mind applied
" ' To all my studies, and was not denied
" ' Praise for my progress——Are you satisfied?

" ' Entirely, madam! else were I possess'd
" ' By a strong spirit who could never rest.
" ' Yes! yes; no more I question,—here I close
" ' The theme for ever. Let us to repose.' "

BOOK X.

THE OLD BACHELOR.

A Friend arrives at the Hall—Old Bachelors and Maids—Relation of one—His Parents—The first Courtship—The second—The third—Long Interval—Travel—Decline of Life—The fourth Lady—Conclusion.

Save their kind friend the Rector, Richard yet
Had not a favourite of his Brother met:
Now at the Hall that welcome guest appear'd,
By trust, by trials, and by time endear'd;
Of him the grateful 'Squire his love profess'd,
And full regard—he was of friends the best;
" Yet not to him alone this good I owe,
" This social pleasure that our friends bestow;
" The sex that wrought in earlier life my woes,
" With loss of time who murder'd my repose,
" They to my joys administer, nor vex
" Me more; and now I venerate the sex;
" And boast the friendship of a Spinster kind,
" Cheerful, and pleasant, to her fate resign'd;
" Then by her side my Bachelor I place,
" And hold them honours to the human race.
" Yet these are they in tale and song display'd,
" The peevish man and the repining maid—
" Creatures made up of misery and spite,
" Who taste no pleasures, except those they blight;
" From whom the affrighten'd niece and nephew fly,—
" Fear'd while they live, and useless till they die.

" Not such these friends of mine; they never meant
" That youth should so be lost, or life be spent.
" They had warm passions, tender hopes, desires
" That youth indulges, and that love inspires:
" But fortune frown'd on their designs, displaced
" The views of hope and love's gay dreams disgraced;
" Took from the soul her sunny views, and spread
" A cloud of dark but varying gloom instead:
" And shall we these with ridicule pursue,
" Because they did not what they could not do?
" If they their lot preferr'd, still why the jest
" On those who took the way they judged the best?
" But if they sought a change, and sought in vain,
" 'Tis worse than brutal to deride their pain.
" But you will see them—see the man I praise,
" The kind protector in my troubled days,
" Himself in trouble; you shall see him now,
" And learn his worth, and my applause allow."

This friend appear'd with talents form'd to please,
And with some looks of sprightliness and ease;

To him indeed the ills of life were known,
But misery had not made him all her own.

They spoke on various themes, and George design'd
To show his Brother this, the favourite mind:
To lead the friend, by subjects he could choose,
To paint himself, his life, and earlier views,
What he was bless'd to hope, what he was doom'd to lose.

They spoke of marriage, and he understood
Their call on him, and said, "It is not good
"To be alone, although alone to be
"Is freedom: so are men in deserts free:
"Men who unyoked and unattended groan,
"Condemn'd and grieved to walk their way alone:
"Whatever ills a married pair betide,
"Each feels a stay, a comfort, or a guide:
"'Not always comfort,' will our wits reply.—
"Wits are not judges, nor the cause shall try.
"Have I not seen, when grief his visits paid,
"That they were easier by communion made?
"True, with the quiet times and days serene,
"There have been flying clouds of care and spleen;
"But is not man, the solitary, sick
"Of his existence, sad and splenetic?
"And who will help him, when such evils come,
"To bear the pressure or to clear the gloom?

"Do you not find, that joy within the breast
"Of the unwedded man is soon suppress'd;
"While to the bosom of a wife convey'd,
"Increase is by participation made?—
"The lighted lamp that gives another light,
"Say, is it by th' imparted blaze less bright?
"Are not both gainers when the heart's distress
"Is so divided, that the pain is less?
"And when the tear has stood in either eye,
"Love's sun shines out, and they are quickly dry."

He ended here,—but would he not confess,
How came these feelings on his mind to press?
He would! nor fear'd his weakness to display
To men like them; their weakness too had they.
Bright shone the fire, wine sparkled, sordid care
Was banish'd far, at least appear'd not there:
A kind and social spirit each possess'd,
And thus began his tale the friendly guest.

"Near to my father's mansion,—but apart,
"I must acknowledge, from my father's heart,—
"Dwelt a keen sportsman, in a pleasant seat;
"Nor met the neighbours as should neighbours meet:
"To them revenge appear'd a kind of right,
"A lawful pleasure, an avow'd delight;
"Their neighbours too blew up their passion's fire,
"And urged the anger of each rival-squire;
"More still their waspish tempers to inflame,
"A party-spirit, friend of anger, came:
"Oft would my father cry, 'That tory-knave,
"'That villain-placeman, would the land enslave.'
"Not that his neighbour had indeed a place,
"But would accept one—that was his disgrace;
"Who, in his turn, was sure my father plann'd
"To revolutionise his native land.
"He dared the most destructive things advance,
"And even pray'd for liberty to France;
"Had still good hope that Heaven would grant his prayer,
"That he might see a revolution there.
"At this the tory-squire was much perplex'd:
"'Freedom in France!—what will he utter next?
"'Sooner should I in Paris look to see
"'An English army sent their guard to be.'

"My poor mamma, who had her mind subdued
"By whig-control, and hated every feud,
"Would have her neighbour met with mind serene;
"But fiercer spirit fired the tory-queen:
"My parents both had given her high disgust,
"While she resenting said, 'Revenge is just;'
"And till th' offending parties chose to stoop,
"She judged it right to keep resentment up;
"Could she in friendship with a woman live
"Who could the insult of a man forgive?
"Did not her husband in a crowded room
"Once call her idiot, and the thing was dumb?
"The man's attack was brutal, to be sure,
"But she no less an idiot to endure.

"This lofty dame, with unrelenting soul,
"Had a fair girl to govern and control;
"The dear Maria!—whom, when first I met,—
"Shame on this weakness! do I feel it yet?

"The parent's anger, you will oft-times see,
"Prepares the children's minds for amity;
"Youth will not enter into such debate,
"'T is not in them to cherish groundless hate;
"Nor can they feel men's quarrels, or their cares
"Of whig or tory, partridges or hares.

"Long ere we loved, this gentle girl and I
"Gave to our parents' discord many a sigh;
"It was not ours,—and when the meeting came
"It pleased us much to find our thoughts the same;
"But grief and trouble in our minds arose
"From the fierce spirits we could not compose;
"And much it vex'd us that the friends so dear
"To us should foes among themselves appear.

"Such was this maid, the angel of her race,
"Whom I had loved in any time and place;
"But in a time and place which chance assign'd,
"When it was almost treason to be kind,—
"When we had vast impediments in view,—
"Then wonder not that love in terror grew
"With double speed—we look'd, and strove to find
"A kindred spirit in the hostile mind;
"But is it hostile? there appears no sign
"In those dear looks of warfare—none have mine;
"At length I whisper'd—'Would that war might cease
"'Between our houses, and that all was peace!'
"A sweet confusion on her features rose,—
"'She could not bear to think of having foes,

"'When we might all as friends and neighbours live,—
"'And for that blessing, oh! what would she give!'
"'Then let us try and our endeavours blend,'.
"I said, 'to bring these quarrels to an end.'
"Thus, with one purpose in our hearts, we strove,
"And, if no more, increased our secret love;
"Love that, with such impediments in view,
"To meet the growing danger stronger grew:
"And from that time each heart, resolved and sure,
"Grew firm in hope and patient to endure.

"To those who know this season of delight
"I need not strive their feelings to excite;
"To those who know not the delight or pain
"The best description would be lent in vain;
"And to the grieving, who will no more find
"The bower of bliss, to paint it were unkind;
"I pass it by, to tell that long we tried
"To bring our fathers over to our side;
"'T was bootless on their wives our skill to try,
"For one would not, and one in vain comply.

"First I began my father's heart to move,
"By boldly saying, 'We are born to love;'
"My father answer'd, with an air of ease,
"'Well! very well! be loving if you please!
"'Except a man insults us or offends,
"'In my opinion we should all be friends.'

"This gain'd me nothing; little would accrue
"From clearing points so useless, though so true;
"But with some pains I brought him to confess,
"That to forgive our wrongs is to redress.

"'It might be so,' he answer'd, yet with doubt
"That it might not; 'but what is this about?'
"I dared not speak directly, but I strove
"To keep my subjects, harmony and love.

"Coolly my father look'd, and much enjoy'd
"The broken eloquence his eye destroy'd;
"Yet less confused, and more resolved, at last
"With bolder effort to my point I pass'd;
"And, fondly speaking of my peerless maid,
"I call'd her worth and beauty to my aid,—
"'Then make her mine!' I said, and for his favour pray'd.

"My father's look was one I seldom saw,—
"It gave no pleasure nor created awe;
"It was the kind of cool contemptuous smile
"Of witty persons overcharged with bile;
"At first he spoke not, nor at last to me:—

"'Well now, and what if such a thing could be?
"'What, if the boy should his addresses pay
"'To the tall girl, would that old tory say?
"'I have no hatred to the dog,—but, still,
"'It was some pleasure when I used him ill;
"'This I must lose if we should brethren be,
"'Yet may be not, for brethren disagree:
"'The fool is right,—there is no bar in life
"'Against their marriage,—let her be his wife.
"'Well, sir, you hear me!'—Never man complied,
"And left a beggar so dissatisfied;

"Though all was granted, yet was grace refused;
"I felt as one indulged, and yet abused,
"And yet, although provoked, I was not unamused.
"In a reply like this appear'd to meet
"All that encourage hope, and that defeat;
"Consent, though cool, had been for me enough,
"But this consent had something of reproof;
"I had prepared my answer to his rage,
"With his contempt I thought not to engage:
"I, like a hero, would my castle storm,
"And meet the giant in his proper form;
"Then, conquering him, would set my princess free;
"This would a trial and a triumph be:
"When, lo! a sneering menial brings the keys,
"And cries in scorn, 'Come, enter, if you please;
"'You'll find the lady sitting on her bed,
"'And 't is expected that you woo and wed.'

"Yet not so easy was my conquest found;
"I met with trouble ere with triumph crown'd.
"Triumph, alas!—My father little thought,
"A king at home, how other minds are wrought;
"True, his meek neighbour was a gentle squire,
"And had a soul averse from wrath and ire;
"He answer'd frankly, when to him I went,
"'I give you little, sir, in my consent:'
"He and my mother were to us inclined,
"The powerless party with the peaceful mind;
"But that meek man was destined to obey
"A sovereign lady's unremitted sway;
"Who bore no partial, no divided rule,—
"All were obedient pupils in her school.
"She had religious zeal, both strong and sour,
"That gave an active sternness to her power;
"But few could please her; she herself was one
"By whom that deed was very seldom done;
"With such a being, so disposed to feed
"Contempt and scorn, how was I to succeed?
"But love commanded, and I made my prayer
"To the stern lady, with an humble air;
"Said all that lovers hope, all measures tried
"That love suggested, and bow'd down to pride.

"Yes! I have now the tigress in my eye:—
"When I had ceased and waited her reply,
"A pause ensued, and then she slowly rose,
"With bitter smile predictive of my woes;
"A look she saw was plainly understood——

"'Admire my daughter! Sir, you 're very good.
"'The girl is decent, take her all in all,—
"'Genteel, we hope—perhaps a thought too tall
"'A daughter's portion hers—you 'll think her fortune small.
"'Perhaps her uncles, in a cause so good,
"'Would do a little for their flesh and blood;
"'We are not ill allied,—and say we make
"'Her portion decent—whither would you take?
"'Is there some cottage on your father's ground,
"'Where may a dwelling for the girl be found?
"'Or a small farm,—your mother understands
"'How to make useful such a pair of hands.

"'But this we drop at present, if you please,
"'We shall have leisure for such things as these;

" 'They will be proper ere you fix the day
" 'For the *poor* girl to honour and obey;
" 'At present therefore we may put an end
" 'To our discourse——Good morrow to you, friend!'

" Then, with a solemn curtsey and profound,
" Her laughing eye she lifted from the ground,
" And left me lost in thought, and gazing idly round.

" Still we had hope, and, growing bold in time,
" I would engage the father in our crime:
" But he refused; for though he wish'd us well,
" He said, 'he must not make his house a hell;'—
" And sure the meaning look that I convey'd
" Did not inform him that the hell was made.
" Still hope existed that a mother's heart
" Would in a daughter's feelings take a part;
" Nor was it vain,—for there is found access
" To a hard heart, in time of its distress.

" The mother sicken'd, and the daughter sigh'd,
" And we petition'd till our queen complied;
" She thought of dying; and if power must cease,
" Better to make, than cause, th' expected peace;
" And sure this kindness, mixing with the blood,
" Its balmy influence caused the body's good;
" For as a charm it work'd upon the frame
" Of the reviving and relenting dame;
" For when recover'd, she no more opposed
" Her daughter's wishes; here contention closed.

" Then bliss ensued, so exquisitely sweet,
" That with it once, once only, we can meet;
" For though we love again, and though once more
" We feel th' enlivening hope we felt before,
" Still the pure freshness of the joy that cast
" Its sweet around us is for ever pass'd.
" Oh! time to memory precious,—ever dear,
" Though ever painful—this eventful year;
" What bliss is now in view! and now what woes appear!
" Sweet hours of expectation!—I was gone
" To the vile town to press our business on;
" To urge its formal instruments,—and lo!
" Comes with dire looks a messenger of woe,
" With tidings sad as death!—With all my speed
" I reach'd her home!—but that pure soul was freed—
" She was no more—for ever shut that eye,
" That look'd all soul, as if it could not die;
" It could not see me—Oh! the strange distress
" Of these new feelings!—misery's excess;
" What can describe it? words will not express.
" When I look back upon that dreadful scene,
" I feel renew'd the anguish that has been;
" And reason trembles——Yes! you bid me cease,
" Nor try to think; but I will think in peace.

" Unbid and unforbidden, to the room
" I went, a gloomy wretch amid that gloom;
" And there the lovely being on her bed
" Shrouded and cold was laid—Maria dead!
" There was I left,—and I have now no thought
" Remains with me, how fear or fancy wrought;
" I know I gazed upon the marble cheek,
" And pray'd the dear departed girl to speak:
" Further I know not, for, till years were fled,
" All was extinguish'd—all with her was dead.
" I had a general terror, dread of all
" That could a thinking, feeling man befall;
" I was desirous from myself to run,
" And something, but I knew not what, to shun:
" There was a blank from this I cannot fill,
" It is a puzzle and a terror still.
" Yet did I feel some intervals of bliss,
" E'en with the horrors of a fate like this;
" And dreams of wonderful construction paid
" For waking horror—dear angelic maid!

" When peace return'd, unfelt for many a year,
" And Hope, discarded flatterer, dared t' appear,
" I heard of my estate, how free from debt,
" And of the comforts life afforded yet;
" Beside that best of comforts in a life
" So sad as mine—a fond and faithful wife.
" My gentle mother, now a widow, made
" These strong attempts to guide me or persuade.

" 'Much time is lost,' she said, 'but yet my son
" 'May, in the race of life, have much to run;
" 'When I am gone, thy life to thee will seem
" 'Lonely and sad, a melancholy dream;
" 'Get thee a wife—I will not say to love,
" 'But one, a friend in thy distress to prove,
" 'One who will kindly help thee to sustain
" 'Thy spirit's burden in its hours of pain;
" 'Say, will you marry?'—I in haste replied,
" 'And who would be the self-devoted bride?
" 'There is a melancholy power that reigns
" 'Tyrant within me—who would bear his chains,
" 'And hear them clicking every wretched hour,
" 'With will to aid me, but without the power?
" 'But if such one were found with easy mind,
" 'Who would not ask for raptures, I'm resign'd.'

" 'T is quite enough,' my gentle mother cried;
" 'We leave the raptures, and will find the bride.'

" There was a lady near us, quite discreet,
" Whom in our visits 't was our chance to meet,
" One grave and civil, who had no desire
" That men should praise her beauties or admire;
" She in our walks would sometimes take my arm,
" But had no foolish fluttering or alarm;
" She wish'd no heart to wound, no truth to prove,
" And seem'd, like me, as one estranged from love;
" My mother praised her, and with so much skill,
" She gave a certain bias to my will;
" But calm indeed our courtship; I profess'd
" A due regard—my mother did the rest;
" Who soon declared that we should love, and grow
" As fond a couple as the world could show;
" And talk'd of boys and girls with so much glee,
" That I began to wish the thing could be.

" Still when the day that soon would come was named,
" I felt a cold fit, and was half ashamed;
" But we too far proceeded to revoke,
" And had been much too serious for a joke:
" I shook away the fear that man annoys,
" And thought a little of the girls and boys.

" A week remain'd,—for seven succeeding days
" Nor man nor woman might control my ways;
" For seven dear nights I might to rest retire
" At my own time, and none the cause require;
" For seven bless'd days I might go in and out,
" And none demand, 'Sir, what are you about?'
" For one whole week I might at will discourse
" On any subject, with a freeman's force.

" Thus while I thought, I utter'd, as men sing,
" In under-voice, reciting 'With this ring,'
" That when the hour should come, I might not dread
" These, or the words that follow'd, 'I thee wed.'
" Such was my state of mind, exulting now
" And then depress'd—I cannot tell you how—
" When a poor lady, whom her friends could send
" On any message, a convenient friend,
" Who had all feelings of her own o'ercome,
" And could pronounce to any man his doom;
" Whose heart indeed was marble, but whose face
" Assumed the look adapted to the case;
" Enter'd my room, commission'd to assuage
" What was foreseen, my sorrow and my rage.

" It seem'd the lady whom I could prefer,
" And could my much-loved freedom lose for her,
" Had bold attempts, but not successful, made,
" The heart of some rich cousin to invade;
" Who, half resisting, half complying, kept
" A cautious distance, and the business slept.

" This prudent swain his own importance knew,
" And swore to part the now affianced two:
" Fill'd with insidious purpose, forth he went,
" Profess'd his love, and woo'd her to consent:
" 'Ah! were it true!' she sigh'd; he boldly swore
" His love sincere, and mine was sought no more.
" All this the witch at dreadful length reveal'd,
" And begg'd me calmly to my fate to yield:
" Much pains she took engagements old to state,
" And hoped to hear me curse my cruel fate,
" Threat'ning my luckless life; and thought it strange
" In me to bear the unexpected change:
" In my calm feelings she beheld disguise,
" And told of some strange wildness in my eyes.

" But there was nothing in the eye amiss,
" And the heart calmly bore a stroke like this:
" Not so my mother; though of gentle kind,
" She could no mercy for the creature find.

" 'Vile plot!' she said.—'But, madam, if they plot,
" 'And you would have revenge, disturb them not.'

" 'What can we do, my son?'—'Consult our ease,
" 'And do just nothing, madam, if you please.'

" 'What will be said?'—'We need not that discuss;
" 'Our friends and neighbours will do that for us.'

" 'Do you so lightly, son, your loss sustain?'—
" 'Nay, my dear madam, but I count it gain.'

" 'The world will blame us, sure, if we be still.'—
" 'And, if we stir, you may be sure it will.'

" 'Not to such loss your father had agreed.'—
" 'No, for my father's had been loss indeed.'

" With gracious smile my mother gave assent,
" And let th' affair slip by with much content.

" Some old dispute the lover meant should rise,
" Some point of strife they could not compromise,
" Displeased the squire—he from the field withdrew,
" Not quite conceal'd, not fully placed in view;
" But half advancing, half retreating, kept
" At his old distance, and the business slept.

" Six years had pass'd, and forty ere the six,
" When Time began to play his usual tricks:
" The locks once comely in a virgin's sight,
" Locks of pure brown, display'd th' encroaching white;
" The blood once fervid now to cool began,
" And Time's strong pressure to subdue the man:
" I rode or walk'd as I was wont before,
" But now the bounding spirit was no more;
" A moderate pace would now my body heat,
" A walk of moderate length distress my feet.
" I shew'd my stranger-guest those hills sublime,
" But said, 'The view is poor, we need not climb.'
" At a friend's mansion I began to dread
" The cold neat parlour, and the gay glazed bed;
" At home I felt a more decided taste,
" And must have all things in my order placed;
" I ceased to hunt, my horses pleased me less,
" My dinner more; I learn'd to play at chess;
" I took my dog and gun, but saw the brute
" Was disappointed that I did not shoot;
" My morning walks I now could bear to lose,
" And bless'd the shower that gave me not to choose:
" In fact, I felt a languor stealing on;
" The active arm, the agile hand were gone;
" Small daily actions into habits grew,
" And new dislike to forms and fashion new;
" I loved my trees in order to dispose,
" I number'd peaches, look'd how stocks arose,
" Told the same story oft—in short, began to prose.[3]

[3] ["The 'Old Bachelor,' who had been five times on the brink of matrimony, is mixed up of sorrow and mirth. The description of the first coming on of old age is admirable—though we feel assured, somehow, that this malicious observer has mistaken the date of these ugly symptoms, and brought them into view nine or ten, or, at all events, six or seven years too early."—*Edinburgh Review.*]

" My books were changed; I now preferr'd the truth
" To the light reading of unsettled youth;
" Novels grew tedious, but, by choice or chance,
" I still had interest in the wild romance:
" There is an age, we know, when tales of love
" Form the sweet pabulum our hearts approve;
" Then as we read we feel, and are indeed,
" We judge, th' heroic men of whom we read;
" But in our after life these fancies fail,
" We cannot be the heroes of the tale;
" The parts that Cliffords, Mordaunts, Bevilles play,
" We cannot,—cannot be so smart and gay.

" But all the mighty deeds and matchless powers
" Of errant knights we never fancied ours,
" And thus the prowess of each gifted knight
" Must at all times create the same delight;
" Lovelace a forward youth might hope to seem,
" But Lancelot never,—that he could not dream;
" Nothing reminds us, in the magic page
" Of old romance, of our declining age:
" If once our fancy mighty dragons slew,
" This is no more than fancy now can do;
" But when the heroes of a novel come,
" Conquer'd and conquering, to a drawing-room,
" We no more feel the vanity that sees
" Within ourselves what we admire in these;
" And so we leave the modern tale, to fly
" From realm to realm with Tristram or Sir Guy.

" Not quite a Quixote, I could not suppose
" That queens would call me to subdue their foes;
" But, by a voluntary weakness sway'd,
" When fancy call'd, I willingly obey'd.

" Such I became, and I believed my heart
" Might yet be pierced by some peculiar dart
" Of right heroic kind, and I could prove
" Fond of some peerless nymph who deign'd to love,
" Some high-soul'd virgin, who had spent her time
" In studies grave, heroic, and sublime;
" Who would not like me less that I had spent
" Years eight-and-forty, just the age of Kent,[4]
" But not with Kent's discretion, for I grew
" Fond of a creature whom my fancy drew—
" A kind of beings who are never found
" On middle-earth, but grow on fairy-ground.

" These found I not; but I had luck to find
" A mortal woman of this fairy kind;
" A thin, tall, upright, serious, slender maid,
" Who in my own romantic regions stray'd;
" From the world's glare to this sweet vale retired,
" To dwell unseen, unsullied, unadmired;
" In all her virgin excellence, above
" The gaze of crowds and hopes of vulgar love.
" We spoke of noble deeds in happier times,
" Of glorious virtues, of debasing crimes:

" Warm was the season, and the subject too,
" And therefore warm in our discourse we grew.
" Love made such haste, that, ere a month was flown
" Since first we met, he had us for his own;
" Riches are trifles in a hero's sight,
" And lead to questions low and unpolite;
" I nothing said of money or of land,
" But bent my knee, and fondly ask'd her hand;
" And the dear lady, with a grace divine,
" Gave it, and frankly answer'd, 'It is thine.'

" Our reading was not to romance confined,
" But still it gave its colour to the mind—
" Gave to our studies something of its force,
" And made profound and tender our discourse;
" Our subjects all, and our religion, took
" The grave and solemn spirit of our book:
" And who had seen us walk, or heard us read,
" Would say, 'These lovers are sublime indeed.'

" I knew not why, but, when the day was named,
" My ardent wishes felt a little tamed;
" My mother's sickness then awaked my grief,
" And yet, to own the truth, was some relief;
" It left uncertain that decisive time
" That made my feelings nervous and sublime.

" Still all was kindness, and at morn and eve
" I made a visit, talk'd, and took my leave:
" Kind were the lady's looks, her eyes were bright,
" And swam, I thought, in exquisite delight;
" A lovely red suffused the virgin cheek,
" And spoke more plainly than the tongue could speak;
" Plainly all seem'd to promise love and joy,
" Nor fear'd we aught that might our bliss destroy.

" Engaged by business, I one morn delay'd
" My usual call on the accomplish'd maid;
" But soon, that small impediment removed,
" I paid the visit that decisive proved;
" For the fair lady had, with grieving heart,
" So I believed, retired to sigh apart:
" I saw her friend, and begg'd her to entreat
" My gentle nymph her sighing swain to meet.

" The gossip gone—what demon, in his spite
" To love and man, could my frail mind excite,
" And lead me curious on, against all sense of right?
" There met my eye, unclosed, a closet's door—
" Shame! how could I the secrets there explore?
" Pride, honour, friendship, love, condemn'd the deed,
" And yet, in spite of all, I could proceed!
" I went, I saw—shall I describe the hoard
" Of precious worth in seal'd deposits stored
" Of sparkling hues? Enough—enough is told;
" 'Tis not for man such mysteries to unfold.
" Thus far I dare:—Whene'er those orbits swam
" In that blue liquid that restrain'd their flame,

[4] ["*Lear.* How old art thou?
"*Kent.* Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing; nor so old, to dote on her for anything: I have years on my back forty-eight."—LEAR.]

" As showers the sunbeams — when the crimson glow
" Of the red rose o'erspread those cheeks of snow,
" I saw, but not the cause—'t was not the red
" Of transient blush that o'er her face was spread;
" 'T was not the lighter red, that partly streaks
" The Catherine pear, that brighten'd o'er her cheeks,
" Nor scarlet blush of shame—but such disclose
" The velvet petals of the Austrian rose
" When first unfolded, warm the glowing hue,
" Nor cold as rouge, but deep'ning on the view;
" Such were those cheeks—the causes unexplored
" Were now detected in that secret hoard;
" And ever to that rich recess would turn
" My mind, and cause for such effect discern.

" Such was my fortune, O! my friends, and such
" The end of lofty hopes that grasp'd too much.
" This was, indeed, a trying time in life—
" I lost at once a mother and a wife;
" Yet compensation came in time for these,
" And what I lost in joy I gain'd in ease."

" But," said the Squire, " did thus your courtship cease?
" Resign'd your mistress her betroth'd in peace?"

" Yes; and had sense her feelings to restrain,
" Nor ask'd me once my conduct to explain;
" But me she saw those swimming eyes explore,
" And explanation she required no more:
" Friend to the last, I left her with regret—
" Nay, leave her not, for we are neighbours yet.

" These views extinct, I travell'd, not with taste,
" But so that time ran wickedly to waste;
" I penn'd some notes, and might a book have made,
" But I had no connection with the trade;
" Bridges and churches, towers and halls, I saw,
" Maids and Madonnas, and could sketch and draw:
" Yes, I had made a book, but that my pride
" In the not making was more gratified.

" There was one feeling upon foreign ground,
" That more distressing than the rest was found—
" That though with joy I should my country see,
" There none had pleasure in expecting me.

" I now was sixty, but could walk and eat;
" My food was pleasant and my slumbers sweet:
" But what could urge me at a day so late
" To think of women?—my unlucky fate.
" It was not sudden; I had no alarms,
" But was attack'd when resting on my arms;
" Like the poor soldier:—when the battle raged
" The man escaped, though twice or thrice engaged;
" But when it ended, in a quiet spot
" He fell, the victim of a random-shot.

" With my good friend the Vicar oft I spent
" The evening hours in quiet, as I meant;
" He was a friend in whom, although untried
" By aught severe, I found I could confide;
" A pleasant, sturdy disputant was he,
" Who had a daughter—such the Fates decree,
" To prove how weak is man—poor yielding man like me.

" Time after time the maid went out and in,
" Ere love was yet beginning to begin;
" The first awakening proof, the early doubt,
" Rose from observing she went in and out.
" My friend, though careless, seem'd my mind to explore,
" ' Why do you look so often at the door?'
" I then was cautious, but it did no good,
" For she at least my meanings understood:
" But to the Vicar nothing she convey'd
" Of what she thought—she did not feel afraid.

" I must confess, this creature in her mind
" Nor face had beauty that a man would blind;
" No poet of her matchless charms would write,
" Yet sober praise they fairly would excite:
" She was a creature form'd man's heart to make
" Serenely happy, not to pierce and shake;
" If she were tried for breaking human hearts,
" Men would acquit her—she had not the arts;
" Yet without art, at first without design,
" She soon became the arbitress of mine;
" Without pretensions—nay, without pretence,
" But by a native strange intelligence
" Women possess when they behold a man
" Whom they can tease, and are assured they can;
" Then 'tis their souls' delight and pride to reign
" O'er the fond slave, to give him ease or pain,
" And stretch and loose by turns the weighty view-less chain.

" Though much she knew, yet nothing could she prove;
" I had not yet confess'd the crime of love;
" But in an hour when guardian-angels sleep,
" I fail'd the secret of my soul to keep;
" And then I saw the triumph in those eyes
" That spoke—' Ay, now you are indeed my prize.'
" I almost thought I saw compassion, too,
" For all the cruel things she meant to do.
" Well I can call to mind the managed air
" That gave no comfort, that brought no despair,
" That in a dubious balance held the mind,
" To each side turning, never much inclined.

" She spoke with kindness—thought the honour high,
" And knew not how to give a fit reply;
" She could not, would not, dared not, must not deem
" Such language proof of aught but my esteem;
" It made her proud—she never could forget
" My partial thoughts—she felt her much in debt:
" She who had never in her life indulged
" The thought of hearing what I now divulged—
" I who had seen so many and so much,—
" It was an honour—she would deem it such;
" Our different years, indeed, would put an end
" To other views, but still her father's friend
" To her, she humbly hoped, would his regard extend.

" Thus saying nothing, all she meant to say,
" She play'd the part the sex delights to play;

" Now by some act of kindness giving scope
" To the new workings of excited hope;
" Then by an air of something like disdain,
" But scarcely seen, repelling it again;
" Then for a season, neither cold nor kind,
" She kept a sort of balance in the mind,
" And as his pole a dancer on the rope,
" The equal poise on both sides kept me up.

" Is it not strange that man can fairly view
" Pursuit like this, and yet his point pursue?
" While he the folly fairly will confess,
" And even feel the danger of success?
" But so it is, and nought the Circes care
" How ill their victims with their poison fare,
" When thus they trifle, and with quiet soul
" Mix their ingredients in the maddening bowl.
" Their high regard, the softness of their air,
" The pitying grief that saddens at a prayer,
" Their grave petitions for the peace of mind
" That they determine you shall never find,
" And all their vain amazement that a man
" Like you should love—they wonder how you can!

" For months the idler play'd her wicked part,
" Then fairly gave the secret of her heart.
" ' She hoped '—I now the smiling gipsy view—
" ' Her father's friend would be her lover's too,
" ' Young Henry Gale '—But why delay so long?—
" She could not tell—she fear'd it might be wrong,
" ' But I was good '—I knew not, I was weak,
" And spoke as love directed me to speak.

" When in my arms their boy and girl I take,
" I feel a fondness for the mother's sake;
" But though the dears some softening thoughts excite,
" I have no wishes for the father's right.

" Now all is quiet, and the mind sustains
" Its proper comforts, its befitting pains;
" The heart reposes; it has had its share
" Of love, as much as it could fairly bear:
" And what is left in life that now demands its care?

" For O! my friends, if this were all indeed,
" Could we believe that nothing would succeed?
" If all were but this daily dose of life,
" Without a care or comfort, child or wife;
" These walks for health with nothing more in view,
" This doing nothing, and with labour too;
" This frequent asking when 't is time to dine,
" This daily dozing o'er the news and wine;
" This age's riddle, when each day appears
" So very long, so very short the years:
" If this were all—but let me not suppose—
" What then were life? whose virtues, trials, woes,
" Would sleep th' eternal sleep, and there the scene would close.

" This cannot be—but why has Time a pace
" That seems unequal in our mortal race?

[1] [In the original MS. the Book thus opens:—
That gentle Spinster whom our Squire approved
So well, they judged aright who said he loved,
Though, when they thought to what the love would lead,
They err'd—for neither would so far proceed.

" Quick is that pace in early life, but slow,
" Tedious, and heavy, as we older grow:
" But yet, though slow, the movements are alike,
" And with no force upon the memory strike;
" And therefore, tedious as we find them all,
" They leave us nothing we in view recall;
" But days that we so dull and heavy knew
" Are now as moments passing in review,
" And hence arises ancient men's report,
" That days are tedious, and yet years are short."

BOOK XI.

THE MAID'S STORY.

A Mother's Advice—*Trials for a young Lady*—Ancient Lovers—The Mother a Wife—Grandmamma—*Genteel Economy*—Frederick, a young Collegian—Grandmamma dies—Retreat with Biddy—Comforts of the Poor—Return home—Death of the Husband—Nervous Disorders—Conversion—Frederick a Teacher—Retreat to Sidmouth—Self-Examination—The Mother dies—Frederick a Soldier—Retirement with a Friend—Their Happiness how interrupted—Frederick an Actor—Is dismissed and supported—A last Adventure.

THREE days remain'd their Friend, and then again
The Brothers left, themselves to entertain;
When spake the younger—" It would please me well
" To hear thy Spinster-friend her story tell;
" And our attention would be nobly paid
" Thus to compare the Bachelor and Maid."

" Frank as she is," replied the Squire, " nor one
" Is more disposed to show what she has done
" With time, or time with her; yet all her care
" And every trial she might not declare
" To one a stranger; but to me, her friend,
" She has the story of those trials penn'd;
" These shalt thou hear, for well the maid I know,
" And will her efforts and her conquests show.
" Jacques is abroad, and we alone shall dine,
" And then to give this lady's tale be mine;
" Thou wilt attend to this good spinster's life,
" And grieve and wonder she is not a wife:
" But if we judge by either words or looks,
" Her mode of life, her morals, or her books,
" Her pure devotion, unaffected sense,
" Her placid air, her mild benevolence,
" Her gay good humour, and her manners free,
" She is happy as a maid can be;
" If as a wife I know not, and decline
" Question like this till I can judge of thine."

Then from a secret hoard drew forth the Squire
His tale, and said, " Attention I require—
" My verse you may condemn, my theme you must admire.[1]

This Maiden Lady, to her promise just,
Gave them her story.—She could safely trust
Her neighbours both: the one she long had known,
The other kindness and respect had shown.

I to your kindness speak! let that prevail,
And of my frailty judge as beings frail.——

My father, dying, to my mother left
An infant charge, of all things else bereft;
Poor, but experienced in the world, she knew
What others did, and judged what she could do;
Beauty she justly weigh'd, was never blind
To her own interest, and she read mankind:
She view'd my person with approving glance,
And judged the way my fortune to advance;
Taught me betimes that person to improve,
And make a lawful merchandise of love;
Bade me my temper in subjection keep,
And not permit my vigilance to sleep;
I was not one, a miss, who might presume
Now to be crazed by mirth, now sunk in gloom;
Nor to be fretful, vapourish, or give way
To spleen and anger, as the wealthy may;
But I must please, and all I felt of pride,
Contempt, and hatred, I must cast aside.

"Have not one friend," my mother cried, "not one;
"That bane of our romantic triflers shun;
"Suppose her true, can she afford you aid?
"Suppose her false, your purpose is betray'd;
"And then in dubious points, and matters nice,
"How can you profit by a child's advice?
"While you are writing on from post to post,
"Your hour is over, and a man is lost:
"Girls of their hearts are scribbling; their desires,
"And what the folly of the heart requires,
"Dupes to their dreams—but I the truth impart,
"You cannot, child, afford to have a heart;
"Think nothing of it; to yourself be true,
"And keep life's first great business in your view;—
"Take it, dear Martha, for a useful rule,
"She who is poor is ugly or a fool;
"Or, worse than either, has a bosom fill'd
"With soft emotions, and with raptures thrill'd.[2]

"Read not too much, nor write in verse or prose,
"For then you make the dull and foolish foes;
"Yet those who do, deride not nor condemn,
"It is not safe to raise up foes in them;
"For though they harm you not, as blockheads do,
"There is some malice in the scribbling crew."

Such her advice; full hard with her had dealt
The world, and she the usage keenly felt.

"Keep your good name," she said; "and that to keep,
"You must not suffer vigilance to sleep:
"Some have, perhaps, the name of chaste retain'd,
"When nought of chastity itself remain'd;

Frankly, not fearless, from her early youth,
She gave her tale, nor would disguise a truth;
Timid in places, and with some restraint,
But still resolved the very facts to paint,
With plaintive smile she prefaced what she spoke,
And the Friends listened with attentive look.]

"But there is danger—few have means to blind
"The keen-eyed world, and none to make it kind.

"And one thing more—to free yourself from foes,
"Never a secret to your friend disclose;
"Secrets with girls, like loaded guns with boys,
"Are never valued till they make a noise;
"To show how trusted, they their power display:
"To show how worthy, they the trust betray;
"Like pence in children's pockets secrets lie
"In female bosoms—they must burn or fly.

"Let not your heart be soften'd; if it be,
"Let not the man his softening influence see;
"For the most fond will sometimes tyrants prove,
"And wound the bosom where they trace the love.
"But to your fortune look, on that depend
"For your life's comforts, comforts that attend
"On wealth alone—wealth gone, they have their end."

Such were my mother's cares to mend my lot,
And such her pupil, they succeeded not.

It was conceived the person I had then
Might lead to serious thoughts some wealthy men,
Who, having none their purpose to oppose,
Would soon be won their wishes to disclose:
My mother thought I was the very child
By whom the old and amorous are beguiled:
So mildly gay, so ignorantly fair,
And pure, no doubt, as sleeping infants are:
Then I had lessons how to look and move,
And, I repeat, make merchandise of love.

Thrice it was tried if one so young could bring
Old wary men to buy the binding ring;
And on the taper finger, to whose tip
The fond old swain would press his withering lip,
Place the strong charm:—and one would win my heart
By re-assuming youth—a trying part;
Girls, he supposed, all knew the young were bold,
And he would show that spirit in the old;
In boys they loved to hear the rattling tongue,
And he would talk as idly as the young;
He knew the vices our Lotharios boast,
And he would show of every vice the ghost,
The evil's self, without disguise or dress,
Vice in its own pure native ugliness;
Not as the drunkenness of slaves, to prove
Vice hateful, but that, seeing, I might love.
He drove me out, and I was pleased to see
Care of himself, it served as care for me;
For he would tell me, that he should not spare
Man, horse, or carriage, if I were not there;
Provoked at last, my malice I obey'd,
And smiling said, "Sir, I am not afraid."
This check'd his spirit; but he said, "Could you
"Have charge so rich, you would be careful too."

[2] [Here follows in MS.:—
"Think not of love! it is a chance indeed,
"When love and prudence side by side proceed.
"Nay, when they do, I doubtfully approve—
"Love baffles prudence—Oh! beware of love."]

And he, indeed, so very slowly drove,
That we dismiss'd the over-cautious love.

My next admirer was of equal age,
And wish'd the child's affection to engage,
And keep the fluttering bird a victim in his cage:
He had no portion of his rival's glee,
But gravely praised the gravity in me;
Religious, moral, both in word and deed,
But warmly disputatious in his creed:
Wild in his younger time, as we were told,
And therefore like a penitent when old.
Strange! he should wish a lively girl to look
Upon the methods his repentance took.
Then he would say, he was no more a rake
To squander money for his passions' sake;
Yet, upon proper terms, as man discreet,
He with my mother was disposed to treat,
To whom he told, "the price of beauty fell
"In every market, and but few could sell;
"That trade in India, once alive and brisk,
"Was over done, and scarcely worth the risk."
Then stoop'd to speak of board, and what for life
A wife would cost——if he should take a wife.
Hardly he bargain'd, and so much desired,
That we demurr'd; and he, displeased, retired.

And now I hoped to rest, nor act again
The paltry part for which I felt disdain,
When a third lover came within our view,
And somewhat differing from the former two;
He had been much abroad, and he had seen
The world's weak side, and read the hearts of men;
But all, it seem'd, this study could produce,
Was food for spleen, derision, and abuse;
He levell'd all, as one who had intent
To clear the vile and spot the innocent:
He praised my sense, and said I ought to be
From girl's restraint and nursery maxims free:
He praised my mother; but he judged her wrong
To keep us from the admiring world so long:
He praised himself; and then his vices named,
And call'd them follies, and was not ashamed.
He more than hinted that the lessons taught
By priests were all with superstition fraught;
And I must think them for the crowd design'd,
Not to alarm the free and liberal mind.

Wisdom with him was virtue. They were wrong
And weak, he said, who went not with the throng;
Man must his passions order and restrain,
In all that gives his fellow-subjects pain;
But yet of guilt he would in pity speak,
And, as he judged, the wicked were the weak.

Such was the lover of a simple maid,
Who seem'd to call his logic to his aid,
And to mean something: I will not pretend
To judge the purpose of my reasoning friend,
Who was dismiss'd, in quiet to complain
That so much labour was bestow'd in vain.

And now my mother seem'd disposed to try
A life of reason and tranquillity;
Ere this, her health and spirits were the best,
Hers the day's trifling, and the nightly rest;
But something new was in her mind instill'd;
Unquiet thoughts the matron bosom fill'd;
For five-and-forty peaceful years she bore
Her placid looks, and dress becoming wore:
She could a compliment with pleasure take,
But no absurd impression could it make.
Now were her nerves disorder'd: she was weak,
And must the help of a physician seek—
A Scotch physician, who had just began
To settle near us, quite a graceful man,
And very clever, with a soft address,
That would his meaning tenderly express.

Sick as my mother seem'd, when he inquired
If she was ill, he found her well attired;
She purchased wares so showy and so fine,
The venders all believed th' indulgence mine:
But I, who thrice was woo'd, had lovers three,
Must now again a very infant be;
While the good lady, twenty years a wife,
Was to decide the colour of his life:
And she decided. She was wont t' appear
To these unequal marriages severe;
Her thoughts of such with energy she told,
And was repulsive, dignified, and cold;
But now, like monarchs weary of a throne,
She would no longer reign—at least alone.

She gave her pulse, and with a manner sweet,
Wish'd him to feel how kindly they could beat;
And 't is a thing quite wonderful to tell
How soon he understood them, and how well.

Now, when she married, I from home was sent,
With grandmamma to keep perpetual Lent;
For she would take me on conditions cheap,
For what we scarcely could a parrot keep:
A trifle added to the daily fare
Would feed a maiden who must learn to spare.

With grandmamma I lived in perfect ease;
Consent to starve, and I was sure to please.
Full well I knew the painful shifts we made,
Expenses all to lessen or evade,
And tradesmen's flinty hearts to soften and persuade.

Poor grandmamma among the gentry dwelt
Of a small town, and all the honour felt;
Shrinking from all approaches to disgrace
That might be mark'd in so genteel a place;
Where every daily deed, as soon as done,
Ran through the town as fast as it could run—
At dinners what appear'd—at cards who lost or won.

Our good appearance through the town was known,
Hunger and thirst were matters of our own;
And you would judge that she in scandal dealt
Who told on what we fed, or how we felt.

We had a little maid, some four feet high,
Who was employ'd our household stores to buy;
For she would weary every man in trade,
And tease to assent whom she could not persuade.

Methinks I see her, with her pigmy light,
Precede her mistress in a moonless night;
From the small lantern throwing through the street
The dimm'd effulgence at her lady's feet,
What time she went to prove her well-known skill
With rival friends at their beloved quadrille.

"And how's your pain?" inquired the gentle maid,
For that was asking if with luck she play'd;
And this she answer'd as the cards decreed,
"O Biddy! ask not—very bad indeed;"
Or, in more cheerful tone, from spirit light,
"Why, thank you, Biddy, pretty well to-night."

The good old lady often thought me vain,
And of my dress would tenderly complain;
But liked my taste in food of every kind,
As from all grossness, like her own, refined:
Yet, when she hinted that on herbs and bread
Girls of my age and spirit should be fed,
Whate'er my age had borne, my flesh and blood,
Spirit and strength, the interdict withstood;
But though I might the frugal soul offend
Of the good matron, now my only friend,
And though her purse suggested rules so strict,
Her love could not the punishment inflict:
She sometimes watch'd the morsel with a frown,
And sigh'd to see, but let it still go down.

Our butcher's bill, to me a monstrous sum,
Was such, that, summon'd, he forbore to come:
Proud man was he; and when the bill was paid,
He put the money in his bag and play'd,
Jerking it up, and catching it again,
And poising in his hand in pure disdain;
While the good lady, awed by man so proud,
And yet disposed to have her claims allow'd,
Balanced between humility and pride,
Stood a fall'n empress at the butcher's side,
Praising his meat as delicate and nice——
"Yes, madam, yes! if people pay the price."

So lived the lady, and so murmur'd I,
In all the grief of pride and poverty:
Twice in the year there came a note to tell
How well mamma, who hoped the child was well;
It was not then a pleasure to be styled,
By a mamma of such experience, Child!
But I suppress'd the feelings of my pride,
Or other feelings set them all aside.

There was a youth from college, just the one
I judged mamma would value as a son;
He was to me good, handsome, learn'd, genteel—
I cannot now what then I thought reveal;
But in a word, he was the very youth
Who told me what I judged the very truth,
That love like his and charms like mine agreed,
For all description they must both exceed:
Yet scarcely can I throw a smile on things
So painful, but that Time his comfort brings,
Or rather throws oblivion on the mind;
For we are more forgetful than resign'd.

We both were young, had heard of love and read,
And could see nothing in the thing to dread,
But like a simple pair our time employ'd
In pleasant views to be in time enjoy'd;
When Frederick came, the kind old lady smiled
To see the youth so taken with her child;
A nice young man, who came with unsoil'd feet
In her best room, and neither drank nor eat:
Alas! he planted in a vacant breast
The hopes and fears that robb'd it of its rest.

All now appear'd so right, so fair, so just,
We surely might the lovely prospect trust!
Alas! poor Frederick and his charmer found
That they were standing on fallacious ground:
All that the father of the youth could do
Was done—and now he must himself pursue
Success in life; and, honest truth to state,
He was not fitted for a candidate:
I, too, had nothing in this world below,
Save what a Scotch physician could bestow,
Who for a pittance took my mother's hand,—
And if disposed, what had they to command?
But these were after fears, nor came t' annoy
The tender children in their dreams of joy:
Who talk'd of glebe and garden, tithe and rent,
And how a fancied income should be spent:
What friends, what social parties we should see,
And live with what genteel economy;
In fact, we gave our hearts as children give,
And thought of living as our neighbours live.

Now, when assured ourselves that all was well,
'T was right our friends of these designs to tell:
For this we parted.—Grandmamma, amazed,
Upon her child with fond compassion gazed;
Then pious tears appear'd, but not a word
In aid of weeping, till she cried "Good Lord!"
She then, with hurried motion, sought the stairs,
And, calling Biddy, bade her come to prayers.

Yet the good lady, early in her life,
Was call'd to vow the duties of a wife;
She sought the altar by her friends' advice,
No free-will offering, but a sacrifice:
But here a forward girl and eager boy
Dared talk of life, and turn their heads with joy.
To my mamma I wrote in just the way
I felt, and said what dreaming lasses say—
How handsome Frederick was, by all confess'd,
How well he look'd, how very well he dress'd;
With learning much, that would for both provide,
His mother's darling, and his father's pride:
And then he loves me more than mind can guess,
Than heart conceive, or eloquence express.

No letter came, a doubtful mind to ease,
And, what was worse, no Frederick came to please;
To college gone—so thought our little maid:
But not to see me! I was much afraid;
I walk'd the garden round, and deeply sigh'd,
When grandmamma grew faint! and dropp'd, and died.
A fate so awful and so sudden drove
All else away, and half extinguish'd love.

Strange people came: they search'd the house around,
And—vulgar wretches!—sold whate'er they found:
The secret hoards that in the drawers were kept,
The silver toys that with the tokens slept,
The precious beads, the corals with their bells,
That laid secure, lock'd up in secret cells,
The costly silk, the tabby, the brocade,
The very garment for the wedding made,
Were brought to sale, with many a jest thereon—
"Going—a bridal dress—for——Going!—Gone!"
That ring, dear pledge of early love and true,
That to the wedded finger almost grew,
Was sold for six and tenpence to a Jew!

Great was the fancied worth; but ah! how small
The sum thus made, and yet how valued all!
But all that to the shameful service went
Just paid the bills, the burial, and the rent;
And I and Biddy, poor deserted maids!
Were turn'd adrift to seek for other aids.

Now left by all the world, as I believed,
I wonder'd much that I so little griev'd;
Yet I was frighten'd at the painful view
Of shiftless want, and saw not what to do:
In times like this the poor have little dread,
They can but work, and they shall then be fed:
And Biddy cheer'd me with such thoughts as this,
"You 'll find the poor have their enjoyments, miss!"
Indeed I saw, for Biddy took me home
To a forsaken hovel's cold and gloom;
And, while my tears in plenteous flow were shed,
With her own hand she placed her proper bed,
Reserved for need. A fire was quickly made,
And food, the purchase for the day, display'd:
She let in air to make the damps retire,
Then placed her sad companion at her fire:
She then began her wonted peace to feel,
She bought her wool, and sought her favourite wheel,
That as she turn'd, she sang with sober glee,
"Begone, dull Care! I 'll have no more with thee:"
Then turn'd to me, and bade me weep no more,
But try and taste the pleasures of the poor.

When dinner came, on table brown and bare
Were placed the humblest forms of earthenware,
With one blue dish, on which our food was placed,
For appetite provided, not for taste:
I look'd disgusted, having lately seen
All so minutely delicate and clean;
Yet, as I sat, I found to my surprise
A vulgar kind of inclination rise,
And near my humble friend and nearer drew,
Tried the strange food, and was partaker too.

I walk'd at eve, but not where I was seen,
And thought, with sorrow, What can Frederick mean?
I must not write, I said, for I am poor;
And then I wept till I could weep no more.
Kind-hearted Biddy tried my griefs to heal:—
"This is a nothing to what others feel;
"Life has a thousand sorrows worse than this;
"A lover lost is not a fortune, miss!
"One goes, another comes, and which is best
"There is no telling—set your heart at rest."

At night we pray'd—I dare not say a word
Of our devotion, it was so absurd;
And very pious upon Biddy's part,
But mine were all effusions of the heart;
While she her angels call'd their peace to shed,
And bless the corners of our little bed.
All was a dream! I said, Is this indeed
To be my life? and thus to lodge and feed,
To pay for what I have, and work for what I need?
Must I be poor? and Frederick, if we meet,
Would not so much as know me in the street;
Or, as he walk'd with ladies, he would try,
To be engaged as we were passing by.
And then I wept to think that I should grow
Like them whom he would be ashamed to know.

On the third day, while striving with my fate,
And hearing Biddy all its comforts state,
Talking of all her neighbours, all her schemes,
Her stories, merry jests, and warning dreams,
With tales of mirth and murder!—Oh! the nights
Pass'd, said the maiden, in such dear delights,—
And I was thinking, Can the time arrive
When I shall thus be humbled, and survive?—
Then I beheld a horse and handsome gig,
With the good air, tall form, and comely wig
Of Doctor Mackey—I in fear began
To say, Good Heaven, preserve me from the man!
But fears ill reason,—Heaven to such a mind
Had lent a heart compassionate and kind.

From him I learn'd that one had call'd to know
What with my hand my parents could bestow;
And when he learn'd the truth, in high disdain
He told my fate, and home return'd again.
"Nay, be not grieved, my lovely girl; but few
"Wed the first love, however kind and true;
"Something there comes to break the strongest vow,
"Or mine had been my gentle Mattie now.
"When the good lady died—but let me leave
"All gloomy subjects—'t is not good to grieve."

Thus the kind Scotchman soothed me: he sustain'd
A father's part, and my submission gain'd:—
Then my affection; and he often told
My sterner parent that her heart was cold.
He grew in honour—he obtain'd a name—
And now a favourite with the place became:
To me most gentle, he would condescend
To read and reason, be the guide and friend;
He taught me knowledge of the wholesome kind,
And fill'd with many a useful truth my mind:
Life's common burden daily lighter grew,
And even Frederick lessen'd in my view:
Cold and repulsive as he once appear'd,
He was by every generous act endear'd;
And, above all, that he with ardour fill'd
My soul for truth—a love by him instill'd;
Till my mamma grew jealous of a maid
To whom a husband such attention paid:

Not grossly jealous; but it gave her pain,
And she observed, "He made her daughter vain;
"And what his help to one who must not look
"To gain her bread by poring on a book?"

This was distress; but this, and all beside,
Was lost in grief—my kinder parent died;
When praised and loved, when joy and health he gave,
He sank lamented to an early grave:
Then love and woe—the parent and the child,
Lost in one grief, allied and reconciled.

Yet soon a will, that left me half his worth,
To the same spirit gave a second birth:
But 't was a mother's spleen; and she indeed
Was sick and sad, and had of comfort need;
I watch'd the way her anxious spirit took,
And often found her musing o'er a book;
She changed her dress, her church, her priest, her prayer,
Join'd a new sect, and sought her comforts there;
Some strange coarse people came, and were so free
In their addresses, they offended me;
But my mamma threw all her pride away—
More humble she as more assuming they.

"And what," they said, as having power, "are now
"The inward conflicts? Do you strive? and how?"
Themselves confessing thoughts so new and wild,
I thought them like the visions of a child.
"Could we," they ask, "our best good deeds condemn?
"And did we long to touch the garment's hem?
"And was it so with us? for so it was with them."
A younger few assumed a softer part,
And tried to shake the fortress of my heart;
To this my pliant mother lent her aid,
And wish'd the winning of her erring maid:
I was constrain'd her female friends to hear,
But suffer'd not a bearded convert near:
Though more than one attempted, with their whine,
And "Sister! sister! how that heart of thine?"
But this was freedom I for ever check'd:
Mine was a heart no brother could affect.

But, "Would I hear the preacher, and receive
"The dropping dew of his discourse at eve?
"The soft, sweet words?" I gave two precious hours
To hear of gifts and graces, helps and powers;
When a pale youth, who should dismiss the flock,
Gave to my bosom an electric shock.
While in that act he look'd upon my face
As one in that all-equalizing place:
Nor, though he sought me, would he lay aside
Their cold, dead freedom, or their dull, sad pride.

Of his conversion he with triumph spoke,
Before he orders from a bishop took;
Then how his father's anger he had braved,
And, safe himself, his erring neighbours saved.
Me he rejoiced a sister to behold
Among the members of his favourite fold;
He had not sought me, the availing call
Demanded all his love, and had it all;
But, now thus met, it must be Heaven's design.—
Indeed! I thought, it never shall be mine.
Yes, we must wed! He was not rich; and I
Had of the earthly good a mean supply;
But it sufficed. Of his conversion then
He told, and labours in converting men;
For he was chosen all their bands among—
Another Daniel! honour'd, though so young.

He call'd me sister; show'd me that he knew
What I possess'd, and told what it would do;
My looks, I judge, express'd my full disdain,
But it was given to the man in vain:
They preach till they are proud, and pride disturbs the brain.

Is this the youth once timid, mild, polite?
How odious now, and sick'ning to the sight!
Proud that he sees, and yet so truly blind,
With all this blight and mildew on the mind!
Amazed the solemn creature heard me vow
That I was not disposed to take him now.

"Then art thou changed, fair maiden? changed thy heart?"
I answer'd, "No; but I perceive thou art."

Still was my mother sad, her nerves relax'd,
And our small income for advice was tax'd;
When I, who long'd for change and freedom, cried,
"Let sea and Sidmouth's balmy air be tried:"
And so they were, and every neighbouring scene,
That make the bosom, like the clime, serene;[3]
Yet were her teachers loth to yield assent,
And not without the warning voice we went;
And there was secret counsel all unknown
To me—but I had counsel of my own.

And now there pass'd a portion of my time
In ease delicious and in joy sublime—
With friends endear'd by kindness—with delight—
In all that could the feeling mind excite,
Or please, excited;—walks in every place
Where we could pleasure find and beauty trace;
Or views at night, where on the rocky steep
Shines the full moon, or glitters on the deep.

Yes, they were happy days; but they are fled!
All now are parted—part are with the dead![4]

[3] [Original MS.:—
On Sidmouth terrace pace at morn and noon,
Or view from Dawlish rocks the full-orb'd moon;
At Exmouth beacon the far bay explore,
Or quiet sit at Teignmouth's pebbly shore;
These scenes are lovely all, and will your peace restore.]

[4] [Thus in the original MS.:—
Dear scenes of social comfort, friendly ease,
The power of pleasing, the delight to please;
When friends agreed the views around t' explore,
When sympathising minds exchanged their store;
When fear was banish'd, and no form desired,
But such as decency and sense required;
When each in meeting wore the looks that make
Such strong impression and preclude mistake;
When looks, and words, and manner all declare
What hearts, and thoughts, and dispositions are;—
In fact, when we in various modes express
That we are happy all; all answer Yes!
This is indeed approach to perfect happiness.

Still it is pleasure, though 't is mix'd with pain,
To think of joys that cannot live again!—
Here cannot live; but they excite desire
Of purer kind, and heavenly thoughts inspire!

And now my mother, weaken'd in her mind,
Her will, subdued before, to me resign'd.
Wean'd from her late directors, by degrees
She sank resign'd, and only sought for ease:
In a small town upon the coast we fix'd;
Nor in amusement with associates mix'd.
My years—but other mode will I pursue,
And count my time by what I sought to do.

And was that mind at ease? could I avow
That no once leading thoughts engaged me now?
Was I convinced th' enthusiastic man
Had ruin'd what the loving boy began?
I answer'd doubting—I could still detect
Feelings too soft—yet him I could reject—
Feelings that came when I had least employ,
When common pleasures I could least enjoy—
When I was pacing lonely in the rays
Of a full moon, in lonely walks and ways—
When I was sighing o'er a tale's distress,
And paid attention to my Bible less.

These found, I sought my remedies for these;
I suffer'd common things my mind to please,
And common pleasures: seldom walk'd alone,
Nor when the moon upon the waters shone;
But then my candles lit, my window closed,
My needle took, and with my neighbours prosed:
And in one year—nay, ere the end of one—
My labour ended, and my love was done.

My heart at rest, I boldly look'd within,
And dared to ask it of its secret sin;
Alas! with pride it answer'd, "Look around,
"And tell me where a better heart is found!"
And then I traced my virtues: Oh! how few,
In fact, they were, and yet how vain I grew;
Thought of my kindness, condescension, ease,
My will, my wishes, nay, my power to please;
I judged me prudent, rational, discreet,
And void of folly, falsehood, and deceit;
I read, not lightly, as I some had known,
But made an author's meaning all my own:
In short, what lady could a poet choose
As a superior subject for his Muse?

So said my heart; and Conscience straight replied—
"I say the matter is not fairly tried:
"I am offended, hurt, dissatisfied.
"First of the Christian graces, let me see
"What thy pretensions to humility?
"Art thou prepared for trial? Wilt thou say,
"I am this being, and for judgment pray?
"And with the gallant Frenchman, wilt thou cry,
"When to thy judge presented, Thus am I[5]—
"Thus was I form'd—these talents I possess'd—
"So I employ'd them—and thou know'st the rest?"

Thus Conscience; and she then a picture drew,
And bade me think and tremble at the view.
One I beheld—a wife, a mother—go
To gloomy scenes of wickedness and woe;
She sought her way through all things vile and base,
And made a prison a religious place:
Fighting her way—the way that angels fight
With powers of darkness—to let in the light;
Tell me, my heart, hast thou such victory won
As this, a sinner of thy sex, has done,
And calls herself a sinner? What art thou?
And where thy praise and exaltation now?[6]
Yet is she tender, delicate, and nice,
And shrinks from all depravity and vice;
Shrinks from the ruffian gaze, the savage gloom,
That reign where guilt and misery find a home:
Guilt chain'd, and misery purchased; and with them
All we abhor, abominate, condemn—
The look of scorn, the scowl, th' insulting leer
Of shame, all fix'd on her who ventures here:
Yet all she braved! she kept her steadfast eye
On the dear cause, and brush'd the baseness by.[7]
So would a mother press her darling child
Close to her breast, with tainted rags defiled.

But thou hast talents truly! say the ten:
Come, let us look at their improvement then.
What hast thou done to aid thy suffering kind,
To help the sick, the deaf, the lame, the blind?
Hast thou not spent thy intellectual force
On books abstruse, in critical discourse?
Wasting in useless energy thy days,
And idly listening to their common praise,
Who can a kind of transient fame dispense,
And say—"A woman of exceeding sense."
Thus tried, and failing, the suggestions fled,
And a corrected spirit reign'd instead.

Dear objects! scatter'd in the world around,
Whom do ye gladden? where may ye be found?
Ye who excited joy by day—by night,
Ye who delighted to dispense delight—
Ye who to please the sadden'd temper strove,
Who, when ye loved not, show'd the effect of love—
Ye who are blessings wheresoe'er ye dwell,
Accept the wishes of a long farewell!]

[5] ["Power Eternal! assemble round thy throne the innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals: let them listen to my Confessions, let them blush at my depravity, let them tremble at my sufferings; let each in his turn expose with equal sincerity the failings, the wanderings of his heart, and, if he dare, aver *I was better than that man.*"—Rousseau.]

[6] [In MS.:—

What is the good that thy whole life has done,
Compared with her one day, a single one?]

[7] ["Of that charity which, tending directly to amend the guilty, is beneficial to the public as well as to its immediate objects, a memorable example has been given in Mrs. Fry, and those other generous Quakers who have effected so great a change in the condition of the female prisoners in Newgate. Their zealous and well-directed benevolence is beyond all praise; and as it proceeds from the most exalted of all motives—true Christian charity—so, beyond all doubt, it carries with it the highest of all rewards."—Southey.]

My mother yet was living; but the flame
Of life now flash'd, and fainter then became;
I made it pleasant, and was pleased to see
A parent looking as a child to me.

And now our humble place grew wondrous gay;
Came gallant persons in their red array:
All strangers welcome there, extremely welcome they.
When in the church I saw inquiring eyes
Fix'd on my face with pleasure and surprise;
And soon a knocking at my door was heard;
And soon the lover of my youth appear'd—
Frederick, in all his glory, glad to meet,
And say, "his happiness was now complete."

He told his flight from superstitious zeal;
But first what torments he was doom'd to feel:
"The tender tears he saw from women fall—
"The strong persuasions of the brethren all—
"The threats of crazed enthusiasts, bound to keep
"The struggling mind, and awe the straying sheep—
"From these, their love, their curses, and their creed,
"Was I by reason and exertion freed."

Then, like a man who often had been told
And was convinced success attends the bold,
His former purpose he renew'd, and swore
He never loved me half so well before:
Before he felt a something to divide
The heart, that now had not a love beside.

In earlier times had I myself amused,
And first my swain perplex'd, and then refused;—
Cure for conceit;—but now in purpose grave,
Strong and decisive the reply I gave.
Still he would come, and talk, as idlers do,
Both of his old associates and his new;
Those who their dreams and reveries receive
For facts, and those who would not facts believe.

He now conceived the Truth was hidden, placed
He knew not where, she never could be traced;
"But in that every place, the world around,
"Might some resemblance of the nymph be found:
"Yet wise men knew these shadows to be vain,
"Such as our true philosophers disdain,—
"They laugh to see what vulgar minds pursue—
"Truth, as a mistress, never in their view—
"But there the shadow flies, and that, they cry, is true."

Thus, at the college and the meeting train'd,
My lover seem'd his acme to have gain'd;
With some compassion I essay'd a cure:
"If truth be hidden, why art thou so sure?"
This he mistook for tenderness, and cried,
"If sure of thee, I care not what beside!"
Compell'd to silence, I, in pure disdain,
Withdrew from one so insolent and vain:
He then retired; and I was kindly told,
"In pure compassion grew estranged and cold."

My mother died; but, in my grief drew near
A bosom friend, who dried the useless tear:
We lived together: we combined our shares
Of the world's good, and learn'd to brave its cares:
We were "the Ladies of the Place," and found
Protection and respect the country round;
We gave, and largely, for we wish'd to live
In good repute—for this 't is good to give;
Our annual present to the priest convey'd
Was kindly taken:—we in comfort pray'd;
There none molested in the crimson pew
The worthy ladies whom the vicar knew;
And we began to think that life might be,
Not happy all, but innocently free.

My friend in early life was bound to one
Of gentle kindred, but a younger son.
He fortune's smile with perseverance woo'd,
And wealth beneath the burning sun pursued:
There, urged by love and youthful hope, he went,
Loth; but 't was all his fortune could present.

From hence he wrote; and, with a lover's fears,
And gloomy fondness, talk'd of future years;
To her devoted, his Priscilla found
His faithful heart still suffering with its wound,
That would not heal. A second time she heard,
And then no more; nor lover since appear'd:
Year after year the country's fleet arrived,
Confirm'd her fear, and yet her love survived;
It still was living; yet her hope was dead,
And youthful dreams, nay, youth itself, was fled;
And he was lost: so urged her friends, so she
At length believed, and thus retired with me.
She would a dedicated vestal prove,
And give her virgin vows to heaven and love;
She dwelt with fond regret on pleasures past,
With ardent hope on those that ever last;
Pious and tender, every day she view'd
With solemn joy our perfect solitude;
Her reading, that which most delighted her,
That soothed the passions, yet would gently stir;
The tender, softening, melancholy strain,
That caused not pleasure, but that vanquish'd pain,
In tears she read, and wept, and long'd to read again.
But other worlds were her supreme delight,
And there it seem'd she long'd to take her flight:
Yet patient, pensive, arm'd by thoughts sublime,
She watch'd the tardy steps of lingering time.

My friend, with face that most would handsome call,
Possess'd the charm that wins the heart of all;
And, thrice entreated by a lover's prayer,
She thrice refused him with determined air.
"No! had the world one monarch, and was he
"All that the heart could wish its lord to be,—
"Lovely and loving, generous, brave, and true,—
"Vain were his hopes to waken hers anew!"
For she was wedded to ideal views,
And fancy's prospects, that she would not lose,
Would not forego, to be a mortal's wife,
And wed the poor realities of life.

There was a day, ere yet the autumn closed,
When, ere her wintry wars, the earth reposed;
When from the yellow weed the feathery crown,
Light as the curling smoke, fell slowly down;
When the wing'd insect settled in our sight,
And waited wind to recommence her flight;

When the wide river was a silver sheet,
And on the ocean slept th' unanchor'd fleet;
When from our garden, as we look'd above,
There was no cloud, and nothing seem'd to move:
Then was my friend in ecstasies—she cried,
" There is, I feel there is, a world beside!
" *Martha*, dear Martha! we shall hear not then
" Of hearts distress'd by good or evil men,
" But all will constant, tender, faithful be—
" So had I been, and so had one with me;
" But in this world the fondest and the best
" Are the most tried, most troubled, and distress'd:
" This is the place for trial; here we prove,
" And there enjoy, the faithfulness of love.

" Nay, were he here in all the pride of youth,
" With honour, valour, tenderness, and truth,
" Entirely mine, yet what could I secure,
" Or who one day of comfort could ensure?
" No! all is closed on earth, and there is now
" Nothing to break th' indissoluble vow;
" But in that world will be th' abiding bliss,
" That pays for every tear and sigh in this."

Such her discourse, and more refined it grew,
Till she had all her glorious dream in view;
And she would further in that dream proceed
Than I dare go, who doubtfully agreed;
Smiling I ask'd, again to draw the soul
From flight so high, and fancy to control,
" If this be truth, the lover's happier way
" Is distant still to keep the purposed day;
" The real bliss would mar the fancied joy,
" And marriage all the dream of love destroy."

She softly smiled, and, as we gravely talk'd,
We saw a man who up the gravel walk'd,
Not quite erect, nor quite by age depress'd,
A travell'd man, and as a merchant dress'd:
Large chain of gold upon his watch he wore,
Small golden buckles on his feet he bore;
A head of gold his costly cane display'd,
And all about him love of gold betray'd.

This comely man moved onward, and a pair
Of comely maidens met with serious air:
Till one exclaim'd, and wildly look'd around,
" O Heav'n, 't is Paul!" and dropp'd upon the ground;
But she recover'd soon, and you must guess
What then ensued, and how much happiness.

They parted lovers, both distress'd to part!
They met as neighbours, heal'd, and whole of heart:
She in his absence look'd to heaven for bliss,
He was contented with a world like this;
And she prepared in some new state to meet
The man now seeking for some snug retreat.
He kindly told her he was firm and true,
Nor doubted her, and bade her then adieu!

" What shall I do?" the sighing maid began:
" How lost the lover! O, how gross the man!"
For the plain dealer had his wish declared,
Nor she, devoted victim! could be spared:
He spoke as one decided—she as one
Who fear'd the love, and would the lover shun.
" O Martha, sister of my soul! how dies
" Each lovely view! for can I truth disguise,
" That this is he? No! nothing shall persuade;
" This is a man the naughty world has made,
" An eating, drinking, buying, bargaining man—
" And can I love him? *No!* I never can.
" What once he was, what fancy gave beside,
" Full well I know, my love was then my pride;
" What time has done, what trade and travel wrought,
" You see! and yet your sorrowing friend is sought;
" But can I take him?"—" Take him not," I cried,
" If so averse—but why so soon decide?"

Meantime a daily guest the man appear'd,
Set all his sail, and for his purpose steer'd:
Loud and familiar, loving, fierce, and free,
He overpower'd her soft timidity;
Who, weak and vain, and grateful to behold
The man was hers, and hers would be the gold;
Thus sundry motives, more than I can name,
Leagued on his part, and she a wife became.

A home was offer'd, but I knew too well
What comfort was with married friends to dwell;
I was resign'd, and, had I felt distress,
Again a lover offer'd some redress;
Behold, a hero of the buskin hears
My loss, and with consoling love appears:
Frederick was now a hero on the stage,
In all its glories, rhapsody, and rage;
Again himself he offer'd—offer'd all
That his a hero of the kind can call:
He for my sake would hope of fame resign,
And leave th' applause of all the world for mine.
Hard fate was Frederick's never to succeed,
Yet ever try—but so it was decreed:
His mind was weaken'd; he would laugh and weep,
And swore profusely I had " murder'd sleep,"
Had quite unmann'd him, cleft his heart in twain,
And he should never " be himself again."

He *was* himself; weak, nervous, kind, and poor,
Ill dress'd and idle, he besieged my door,
Borrow'd,—or, worse, made verses on my charms,
And did his best to fill me with alarms;
I had some pity, and I sought the price
Of my repose—my hero was not nice;
There was a loan, and promise I should be
From all the efforts of his fondness free,
From hunger's future claims, or those of vanity.
" Yet," said he, bowing, " do to study take!
" Oh! what a Desdemona wouldst thou make!"[8]
Thus was my lover lost; yet even now
He claims one thought, and this we will allow.

His father lived to an extreme old age,
But never kind!—his son had left the stage,

[8] [Original MS.:—
And then he spouted—till I cried, Is he
The man I loved? Oh! that could never be.
No! time upon the outward beauty preys,
And the mind's beauty in its vice decays.]

And gain'd some office, but an humble place,
And that he lost! Want sharpen'd his disgrace,
Urged him to seek his father—but too late,
His jealous brothers watch'd and barr'd the gate.[9]

The old man died: but there is one who pays
A moderate pension for his latter days,
Who, though assured inquiries will offend,
Is ever asking for this unknown friend;
Some partial lady, whom he hopes to find,
As to his wants so to his wishes kind.

"Be still," a cool adviser sometimes writes.—
"Nay, but," says he, "the gentle maid invites:
"Do let me know the young! the soft! the fair!"
"Old man," 't is answer'd, "take thyself to prayer!
"Be clean, be sober, to thy priest apply,
"And—dead to all around thee—learn to die!"

Now had I rest from life's strong hopes and fears,
And no disturbance mark'd the flying years;
So on in quiet might those years have pass'd
But for a light adventure, and a last.

A handsome Boy, from schoolday bondage free,
Came with mamma to gaze upon the sea;
With soft blue eye he look'd upon the waves,
And talk'd of treacherous rocks and seamen's graves:
There was much sweetness in his boyish smile,
And signs of feelings frank, that knew not guile.

The partial mother, of her darling proud,
Besought my friendship, and her own avow'd;
She praised her Rupert's person, spirit, ease,
How fond of study, yet how form'd to please;
In our discourse he often bore a part,
And talk'd, Heaven bless him! of his feeling heart;
He spoke of pleasures souls like his enjoy,
And hated Lovelace like a virtuous boy;
He felt for Clementina's holy strife,
And was Sir Charles as large and true as life:
For Virtue's heroines was his soul distress'd;
True love and guileless honour fill'd his breast,
When, as the subjects drew the frequent sigh,
The tear stood trembling in his large blue eye,
And softly he exclaim'd "Sweet, sweetest sympathy!"

When thus I heard the handsome stripling speak,
I smiled assent, and thought to pat his cheek;
But when I saw the feelings blushing there,
Signs of emotions strong, they said—"Forbear!"

The youth would speak of his intent to live
On that estate which Heaven was pleased to give;
There with the partner of his joys to dwell,
And nurse the virtues that he loved so well;
The humble good of happy swains to share,
And from the cottage drive distress and care;

[9] [MS.:—But that he lost, and, with a wither'd hand,
Stood at his father's gate, as beggars stand;
But his were jealous brethren, and they kept
Their dying father from him till he slept.]

To the dear infants make some pleasures known,
And teach, he gravely said, the virtues to his own.

He loved to read in verse, and verse-like prose,
The softest tales of love-inflicted woes;
When, looking fondly, he would smile and cry,
"Is there not bliss in sensibility?"

We walk'd together, and it seem'd not harm
In linking thought with thought, and arm with arm,
Till the dear boy would talk too much of bliss,
And indistinctly murmur—"Such as this."

When no maternal wish her heart beguiled,
The lady call'd her son "the darling child;"
When with some nearer view her speech began,
She changed her phrase, and said, "the good young man!"
And lost, when hinting of some future bride,
The woman's prudence in the mother's pride.

Still decent fear and conscious folly strove
With fond presumption and aspiring love;
But now too plain to me the strife appear'd,
And what he sought I knew, and what he fear'd;
The trembling hand and frequent sigh disclosed
The wish that prudence, care, and time opposed.

Was I not pleased, will you demand?—Amused
By boyish love, that woman's pride refused?
This I acknowledge, and, from day to day,
Resolved no longer at such game to play;
Yet I forbore, though to my purpose true,
And firmly fix'd to bid the youth adieu.
There was a moonlight eve, serenely cool,
When the vast ocean seem'd a mighty pool;
Save the small rippling waves that gently beat,
We scarcely heard them falling at our feet:
His mother absent, absent every sound,
And every sight, that could the youth confound;
The arm, fast lock'd in mine, his fear betray'd,
And, when he spoke not, his designs convey'd;
He oft-times gasp'd for breath, he tried to speak,
And, studying words, at last had words to seek.

Silent the boy, by silence more betray'd,
And, fearing lest he should appear afraid,
He knelt abruptly, and his speech began—
"Pity the pangs of an unhappy man."

"Be sure," I answer'd, "and relieve them too—
"But why that posture? What the woes to you?
"To feel for others' sorrows is humane,
"But too much feeling is our virtue's bane.

"Come, my dear Rupert! now your tale disclose,
"That I may know the sufferer and his woes;
"Know, there is pain that wilful man endures,
"That our reproof and not our pity cures:
"For though for such assumed distress we grieve,
"Since they themselves as well as us deceive,
"Yet we assist not."——The unhappy youth,
Unhappy then, beheld not all the truth.

"O! what is this?" exclaim'd the dubious boy,
"Words that confuse the being they destroy?

" So have I read the gods to madness drive
" The man condemn'd with adverse fate to strive;
" O! make thy victim, though by misery, sure,
" And let me know the pangs I must endure;
" For, like the Grecian warrior, I can pray,
" Falling, to perish in the face of day."

" Pretty, my Rupert; and it proves the use
" Of all that learning which the schools produce:
" But come, your arm—no trembling, but attend
" To sober truth, and a maternal friend.

" You ask for pity?"—" O! indeed I do."
" Well then, you have it, and assistance too:
" Suppose us married!"—" O! the heavenly thought!"
" Nay—nay, my friend, be you by wisdom taught;
" For wisdom tells you, love would soon subside,
" Fall, and make room for penitence and pride;
" Then would you meet the public eye, and blame
" Your private taste, and be o'erwhelm'd with shame:
" How must it then your bosom's peace destroy
" To hear it said, 'The mother and her boy!'
" And then, to show the sneering world it lies,
" You would assume the man, and tyrannize:
" E'en Time, Care's general soother, would augment
" Your self-reproaching, growing discontent.

" Add twenty years to my precarious life,
" And lo! your aged, feeble, wailing wife;
" Displeased, displeasing, discontented, blamed;
" Both, and with cause, ashaming and ashamed:
" When I shall bend beneath a press of time,
" Thou wilt be all erect in manhood's prime;
" Then wilt thou fly to younger minds t' assuage
" Thy bosom's pain, and I in jealous age
" Shall move contempt, if still; if active, rage:
" And though in anguish all my days are pass'd,
" Yet far beyond thy wishes they may last—
" May last till thou, thy better prospects fled,
" Shall have no comfort when thy wife is dead.

" Then thou in turn, though none will call thee old,
" Wilt feel thy spirit fled, thy bosom cold;
" No strong or eager wish to wake the will,
" Life will appear to stagnate and be still,
" As now with me it slumbers: O! rejoice
" That I attend not to that pleading voice;
" So will new hopes this troubled dream succeed,
" And one will gladly hear my Rupert plead."

Ask you, while thus I could the youth deny,
Was I unmoved?—Inexorable I,
Fix'd, and determined: thrice he made his prayer,
With looks of sadness first, and then despair;
Thrice doom'd to bear refusal, not exempt,
At the last effort, from a slight contempt.

Did his distress, his pains, your joy excite?—
No; but I fear'd his perseverance might.
Was there no danger, in the moon's soft rays,
To hear the handsome stripling's earnest praise?
Was there no fear that, while my words reproved
The eager youth, I might myself be moved?

Not for his sake alone I cried "Persist
No more," and with a frown the cause dismiss'd.

Seek you th' event?—I scarcely need reply—
Love, unreturn'd, will languish, pine, and die:
We lived a while in friendship, and with joy
I saw depart in peace the amorous boy.

We met some ten years after, and he then
Was married, and as cool as married men;
He talk'd of war and taxes, trade and farms,
And thought no more of me, or of my charms.

We spoke; and when, alluding to the past,
Something of meaning in my look I cast,
He, who could never thought or wish disguise,
Look'd in my face with trouble and surprise;
To kill reserve, I seized his arm, and cried,
" Know me, my lord!" when, laughing, he replied,
Wonder'd again, and look'd upon my face,
And seem'd unwilling marks of time to trace;
But soon I brought him fairly to confess
That boys in love judge ill of happiness.

Love had his day—to graver subjects led,
My will is govern'd, and my mind is fed;
And to more vacant bosoms I resign
The hopes and fears that once affected mine.

BOOK XII.

SIR OWEN DALE.

The Rector at the Hall—Why absent—He relates the Story of Sir Owen—His Marriage—Death of his Lady—His Mind acquires new Energy—His Passions awake—His Taste and Sensibility—Admires a Lady—Camilla—Her Purpose—Sir Owen's Disappointment—His Spirit of Revenge—How gratified—The Dilemma of Love—An Example of Forgiveness—Its Effect.

Again the Brothers saw their friend the Priest,
Who shared the comforts he so much increased;
Absent of late:—and thus the Squire address'd,
With welcome smile, his ancient friend and guest.

" What has detain'd thee? Some parochial case?
" Some man's desertion, or some maid's disgrace?
" Or wert thou call'd, as parish priest, to give
" Name to a new-born thing that would not live,—
" That its weak glance upon the world had thrown,
" And shrank in terror from the prospect shown?
" Or hast thou heard some dying wretch deplore
" That of his pleasures he could taste no more?
" Who wish'd thy aid his spirits to sustain,
" And drive away the fears that gave him pain?
" For priests are thought to have a patent charm
" To ease the dying sinner of alarm:
" Or was thy business of the carnal sort,
" And thou wert gone a patron's smile to court,
" And Croft or Creswell would'st to Binning add,
" Or take, kind soul! whatever could be had?

" Once more I guess: th' election now is near;
" My friend, perhaps, is sway'd by hope or fear,
" And all a patriot's wishes, forth to ride,
" And hunt for votes to prop the fav'rite side."

" More private duty call'd me hence, to pay
" My friends respect on a rejoicing day,"
Replied the Rector: " there is born a son,
" Pride of an ancient race, who pray'd for one,
" And long desponded. Would you hear the tale—
" Ask, and 't is granted—of Sir Owen Dale?"

" Grant," said the Brothers, " for we humbly ask;
" Ours be the gratitude, and thine the task:"
" Yet dine we first; then to this tale of thine,
" As to thy sermon, seriously incline:
" In neither case our Rector shall complain,
" Of this recited, that composed in vain.
" Something we heard of Vengeance, who appall'd,
" Like an infernal spirit, him who call'd;
" And, ere he vanish'd, would perform his part,
" Inflicting tortures on the wounded heart:
" Of this but little from report we know;
" If you the progress of revenge can show,
" Give it; and all its horrors, if you please,
" We hear our neighbour's sufferings much at ease.

" Is it not so? For do not men delight—
" We call them men—our bruisers to excite,
" And urge, with bribing gold, and feed them for the fight?
" Men beyond common strength, of giant size,
" And threat'ning terrors in each other's eyes;
" When in their naked, native force display'd,
" Look answers look, affrighting and afraid;
" While skill, like spurs and feeding, gives the arm
" The wicked power to do the greater harm:
" Maim'd in the strife, the falling man sustains
" Th' insulting shout, that aggravates his pains:
" Man can bear this; and shall thy hearers heed
" A tale of human sufferings? Come! proceed." [1]

Thus urged, the worthy Rector thought it meet
Some moral truth, as preface, to repeat;
Reflection serious,—commonplace, 't is true,—
But he would act as he was wont to do,
And bring his morals in his neighbour's view.

" Oh! how the passions, insolent and strong,
" Bear our weak minds their rapid course along;
" Make us the madness of their will obey;
" Then die, and leave us to our griefs a prey!"

Sir Owen Dale his fortieth year had seen,
With temper placid, and with mind serene;
Rich; early married to an easy wife,
They led in comfort a domestic life:
He took of his affairs a prudent care,
And was by early habit led to spare;
Not as a miser, but in pure good taste,
That scorn'd the idle wantonness of waste.

In fact, the lessons he from prudence took
Were written in his mind, as in a book:
There what to do he read, and what to shun;
And all commanded was with promptness done:
He seem'd without a passion to proceed,
Or one whose passions no correction need;
Yet some believed those passions only slept,
And were in bounds by early habits kept:
Curb'd as they were by fetters worn so long,
There were who judged them a rebellious throng.

To these he stood; not as a hero true,
Who fought his foes, and in the combat slew,
But one who all those foes, when sleeping, found,
And, unresisted, at his pleasure bound.

We thought—for I was one—that we espied
Some indications strong of dormant pride:
It was his wish in peace with all to live;
And he could pardon, but could not forgive:
Nay, there were times when stern defiance shook
The moral man, and threaten'd in his look.

Should these fierce passions—so we reason'd—break
Their long-worn chain, what ravage will they make!
In vain will prudence then contend with pride,
And reason vainly bid revenge subside;
Anger will not to meek persuasion bend,
Nor to the pleas of hope or fear attend:
What curb shall then, in their disorder'd race,
Check the wild passions? what the calm replace?
Virtue shall strive in vain; and has he help in grace?
While yet the wife with pure discretion ruled,
The man was guided, and the mind was school'd;
But then that mind unaided ran to waste:
He had some learning, but he wanted taste;

[1] [The opening stands thus in the original MS.:—

Bleak was the morn: said Richard, with a sigh,
" I must depart."—" That, Brother, I deny,"
Said George: " you may; but prithee tell me why."
This point before had been discuss'd, but still
Richard submitted to his Brother's will;
But every day gave birth to doubt and fear;
He heard not now as he was wont to hear.
George had discover'd such regret and pain,
That Richard still consented to remain.

Silence ensued—when from the village bell
Came sound for one who bade the world farewell.
Inquiry made, and it was quickly found
Sir Owen Dale had caused the doleful sound;
Lord of a distant village, and his clay
Was borne through Binning on its homeward way.

" Knew you the Knight? Our Rector knew him well,
" And he'll the story of his feelings tell,
" That show at least he had them.—Let us dine;
" I'll introduce the subject with the wine.
" It is a compound story, if he paints
" The whole—and we must ply him if he faints.
" The tale foreshorten'd, nothing is descried,
" But certain persons, that they lived and died;
" But let him fill the canvas, and he brings
" In view the several passions and their springs,
" And we have then more perfect view of things."

The Vicar came, he dined; and they began
Freely to speak of the departed man,
Then ask'd the Vicar to repeat the tale
That he could give them of Sir Owen Dale.]

Placid, not pleased—contented, not employ'd,—
He neither time improved, nor life enjoy'd.

That wife expired, and great the loss sustain'd,
Though much distress he neither felt nor feign'd;
He loved not warmly; but the sudden stroke
Deeply and strongly on his habits broke.
He had no child to soothe him, and his farm,
His sports, his speculations, lost their charm;
Then would he read and travel, would frequent
Life's busy scenes, and forth Sir Owen went:
The mind that now was free, unfix'd, uncheck'd,
Read and observed with wonderful effect;
And still the more he gain'd, the more he long'd
To pay that mind his negligence had wrong'd;
He felt his pleasures rise as he improved,
And, first enduring, then the labour loved.

But, by the light let in, Sir Owen found
Some of those passions had their chain unbound;
As from a trance they rose to act their part,
And seize, as due to them, a feeling heart.
His very person now appear'd refined,
And took some graces from the improving mind:
He grew polite without a fix'd intent,
And to the world a willing pupil went.
Restore him twenty years,—restore him ten,—
And bright had been his earthly prospect then:
But much refinement, when it late arrives,
May be the grace, not comfort, of our lives.

Now had Sir Owen feeling; things of late
Indifferent, he began to love or hate;
What once could neither good nor ill impart,
Now pleased the senses, and now touch'd the heart;
Prospects and pictures struck th' awaken'd sight,
And each new object gave a new delight.
He, like th' imperfect creature who had shaped
A shroud to hide him, had at length escaped;
Changed from his grub-like state, to crawl no more,
But a wing'd being, pleased and form'd to soar.

Now, said his friends, while thus his views improve,
And his mind softens, what if he should love?
True, life with him has yet serene appear'd,
And therefore love in wisdom should be fear'd:
Forty and five his years, and then to sigh
For beauty's favour!—Son of frailty, fly!

Alas! he loved; it was our fear, but ours,
His friends alone. He doubted not his pow'rs
To win the prize, or to repel the charm,
To gain the battle, or escape the harm;
For he had never yet resistance proved,
Nor fear'd that friends should say—"Alas! he loved."

Younger by twenty years, Camilla found
Her face unrivall'd when she smiled or frown'd:
Of all approved; in manner, form, and air,
Made to attract; gay, elegant, and fair:
She had, in beauty's aid, a fair pretence
To cultivated, strong intelligence;
For she a clear and ready mind had fed
With wholesome food; unhurt by what she read:
She loved to please, but, like her dangerous sex,
To please the more whom she design'd to vex.

This heard Sir Owen, and he saw it true;
It promised pleasure, promised danger too;
But this he knew not then, or slighted if he knew.
Yet he delay'd, and would by trials prove
That he was safe; would see the signs of love;
Would not address her while a fear remain'd,
But win his way, assured of what he gain'd.

This saw the lady, not displeased to find
A man at once so cautious and so blind:
She saw his hopes that she would kindly show
Proofs of her passion—then she his should know.
"So, when my heart is bleeding in his sight,
"His love acknowledged will the pains requite;
"It is, when conquer'd, he the heart regards:
"Well, good Sir Owen, let us play our cards."

He spake her praise in terms that love affords,
By words select, and looks surpassing words;
Kindly she listen'd, and in turn essay'd
To pay th' applauses—and she amply paid;
A beauty flattering!—beauteous flatterers feel
The ill you cause, when thus in praise you deal;
For surely he is more than man, or less,
When praised by lips that he would die to press,
And yet his senses undisturb'd can keep,
Can calmly reason, or can soundly sleep.

Not so Sir Owen; him Camilla praised,
And lofty hopes and strong emotions raised;
This had alone the strength of man subdued,
But this enchantress various arts pursued.
Let others, pray for music—others pray'd
In vain—Sir Owen ask'd, and was obey'd:
Let others, walking, sue that arm to take,
Unmoved she kept it for Sir Owen's sake:
Each small request she granted, and, though small,
He thought them pledges of her granting all.

And now the lover, casting doubt aside,
Urged the fond suit that—could not be denied;
Joy more than reverence moved him when he said,
"Now banish all my fears, angelic maid!"
And as she paused for words, he gaily cried,
"I must not, cannot, will not be denied."
Ah! good Sir Owen, think not favours, such
As artful maids allow, amount to much;
The sweet, small, poison'd baits, that take the eye
And win the soul of all who venture nigh.

Camilla listen'd, paused, and look'd surprise,
Fair witch! exulting in her witcheries!
She turn'd aside her face, withdrew her hand,
And softly said, "Sir, let me understand."

"Nay, my dear lady! what can words explain,
"If all my looks and actions plead in vain?
"I love."—She show'd a cool respectful air,
And he began to falter in his prayer,
Yet urged her kindness—Kindness she confess'd,
It was esteem, she felt it, and express'd,
For her dear father's friend; and was it right
That friend of his—she thought of hers—to slight?

This to the wond'ring lover strange and new
And false appear'd—he would not think it true:
Still he pursued the lovely prize, and still
Heard the cold words, design'd his hopes to kill;
He felt dismay'd, as he perceived success
Had inverse ratio, more obtaining less;
And still she grew more cool in her replies,
And talk'd of age and improprieties.

Then to his friends, although it hurt his pride,
And to the lady's, he for aid applied;
Who kindly woo'd for him, but strongly were denied.

And now it was those fiercer passions rose,
Urged by his love, to murder his repose;
Shame shook his soul to be deceived so long,
And fierce Revenge for such contemptuous wrong;
Jealous he grew, and Jealousy supplied
His mind with rage, unsoothed, unsatisfied:
And grievous were the pangs of deeply wounded Pride.
His generous soul had not the grief sustain'd,
Had he not thought, "Revenge may be obtain'd."[2]

Camilla griev'd, but grief was now too late;
She hush'd her fears, and left th' event to fate.

Four years elapsed, nor knew Sir Owen yet
How to repay the meditated debt;
The lovely foe was in her thirtieth year,
Nor saw the favourite of the heart appear;
'Tis sure less sprightly the fair nymph became,
And spoke of former levities with shame:
But this, alas! was not in time confess'd,
And vengeance waited in Sir Owen's breast.

But now the time arrives—the maid must feel
And grieve for wounds that she refused to heal.
Sir Owen, childless, in his love had rear'd
A sister's son, and now the youth appear'd,
In all the pride of manhood, and, beside,
With all a soldier's spirit and his pride:
Valiant and poor, with all that arms bestow,
And wants that captains in their quarters know;
Yet to his uncle's generous heart was due
The praise, that wants of any kind were few.

When he appear'd, Sir Owen felt a joy
Unknown before, his vengeance bless'd the boy—
"To him I dare confide a cause so just;
"Love him she may—Oh! could I say she must!"

Thus fix'd, he more than usual kindness show'd,
Nor let the Captain name the debt he owed;
But when he spoke of gratitude, exclaim'd,
"My dearest Morden! make me not ashamed:
"Each for a friend should do the best he can,
"The most obliged is the obliging man:
"But if you wish to give as well as take,
"You may a debtor of your uncle make."

Morden was earnest in his wish to know
How he could best his grateful spirit show.

Now the third dinner had their powers renew'd,
And fruit and wine upon the table stood;
The fire brought comfort, and the warmth it lent
A cheerful spirit to the feelings sent,
When thus the Uncle—"Morden, I depend
"On you for aid—assist me as a friend:
"Full well I know that you would much forego,
"And much endure to wreak me on my foe.
"Charles, I am wrong'd, insulted—nay, be still,
"Nor look so fiercely,—there are none to kill.

"I loved a lady, somewhat late in life—
"Perhaps too late—and would have made a wife:
"Nay, she consented; for consent I call
"The mark'd distinction that was seen of all,
"And long was seen; but when she knew my pain,
"Saw my first wish her favour to obtain,
"And ask her hand—no sooner was it ask'd,
"Than she, the lovely Jezebel, unmask'd;
"And by her haughty airs, and scornful pride,
"My peace was wounded—nay, my reason tried;
"I felt despised and fallen when we met,
"And she, O folly! looks too lovely yet;
"Yet love no longer in my bosom glows,
"But my heart warms at the revenge it owes.

"Oh! that I saw her with her soul on fire,
"Desperate from love, and sickening with desire;
"While all beheld her just, unpitied pain,
"Grown in neglect, and sharpen'd by disdain!
"Let her be jealous of each maid she sees,
"Striving by every fruitless art to please,
"And when she fondly looks, let looks and fondness tease!
"So, lost on passion's never-resting sea,
"Hopeless and helpless, let her think of me!
"Charles, thou art handsome, nor canst want the art
"To warm a cold or win a wanton heart:
"Be my avenger"——
Charles, with smile, not vain,
Nor quite unmix'd with pity and disdain,
Sat mute in wonder; but he sat not long
Without reflection:—Was Sir Owen wrong?
"So must I think; for can I judge it right
"To treat a lovely lady with despite,
"Because she play'd too roughly with the love
"Of a fond man whom she could not approve?
"And yet to vex him for the love he bore
"Is cause enough for his revenge, and more.
"But, thoughts, to council!—Do I wear a charm
"That will preserve my citadel from harm?
"Like the good knight, I have a heart that feels
"The wounds that beauty makes and kindness heals:
"Beauty she has, it seems, but is not kind—
"So found Sir Owen, and so I may find.
"Yet why, O heart of tinder, why afraid?
"Comes so much danger from so fair a maid?
"Wilt thou be made a voluntary prize
"To the fierce firing of two wicked eyes?
"Think her a foe, and on the danger rush,
"Nor let thy kindred for a coward blush.

[2] [Original MS.:—

Scarcely his generous heart the ills sustain'd,
And vows of vengeance for his ease remain'd,
The shapeless purpose of a soul that feels,
And half suppresses rage, and half reveals.]

" But how if this fair creature should incline
" To think too highly of this love of mine,
" And, taking all my counterfeit address
" For sterling passion, should the like profess?
" Nay, this is folly; or, if I perceive
" Aught of the kind, I can but take my leave;
" And if the heart should feel a little sore,
" Contempt and anger will its ease restore.

" Then, too, to his all-bounteous hand I owe
" All I possess, and almost all I know;
" And shall I for my friend no hazard run,
" Who seeks no more for all his love has done?
" 'T is but to meet and bow, to talk and smile,
" To act a part, and put on love a while:
" And the good knight shall see, this trial made,
" That I have just his talents to persuade;
" For why the lady should her heart bestow
" On me, or I of her enamour'd grow,
" There 's none can reason give, there 's none can
danger show."

These were his rapid thoughts, and then he
spoke.
" I make a promise, and will not revoke:
" You are my judge in what is fit and right,
" And I obey you—bid me love or fight;
" Yet had I rather, so the act could meet
" With your concurrence, not to play the cheat:
" In a fair cause "——
" Charles, fighting for your king,
" Did you e'er judge the merits of the thing?
" Show me a monarch who has cause like mine,
" And yet what soldier would his cause decline?"

Poor Charles or saw not, or refused to see,
How weak the reasoning of our hopes may be,
And said—" Dear uncle, I my king obey'd,
" And for his glory's sake the soldier play'd;
" Now a like duty shall your nephew rule,
" And for your vengeance I will play the fool."
'T was well; but ere they parted for repose,
A solemn oath must the engagement close.

" Swear to me, nephew, from the day you meet
" This cruel girl, there shall be no deceit;
" That by all means approved and used by man
" You win this dangerous woman, if you can;
" That, being won, you my commands obey,
" Leave her lamenting, and pursue your way;
" And that, as in my business, you will take
" My will as guide, and no resistance make:
" Take now an oath—within the volume look—
" There is the Gospel—swear, and kiss the book."

" It cannot be," thought Charles, " he cannot rest
" In this strange humour,—it is all a jest,
" All but dissimulation.—Well, sir, there;
" Now I have sworn as you would have me swear."

" 'T is well," the uncle said in solemn tone;
" Now send me vengeance, Fate, and groan for
groan!"

The time is come: the soldier now must meet
Th' unconscious object of the sworn deceit.
They meet; each other's looks the pair explore,
And, such their fortune, wish'd to part no more.

Whether a man is thus disposed to break
An evil compact he was forced to make,
Or whether some contention in the breast
Will not permit a feeling heart to rest;
Or was it nature, who in every case
Has made such mind subjected to such face;
Whate'er the cause, no sooner met the pair
Than both began to love, and one to feel despair.

But the fair damsel saw with strong delight
Th' impression made, and gloried in the sight:
No chilling doubt alarm'd her tender breast,
But she rejoiced in all his looks profess'd;
Long ere his words her lover's hopes convey'd
They warm'd the bosom of the conscious maid;
One spirit seem'd each nature to inspire,
And the two hearts were fix'd in one desire.

" Now," thought the courteous maid, " my
father's friend
" Will ready pardon to my fault extend;
" He shall no longer lead that hermit's life,
" But love his mistress in his nephew's wife;
" My humble duty shall his anger kill,
" And I who fled his love will meet his will,
" Prevent his least desire, and every wish fulfil."

Hail, happy power! that to the present lends
Such views; not all on Fortune's wheel depends;
Hope, fair enchantress, drives each cloud away,
And now enjoys the glad but distant day.

Still fears ensued; for love produces fear.—
" To this dear maid can I indeed be dear?
" My fatal oath, alas! I now repent;
" Stern in his purpose, he will not relent.
" Would, ere that oath, I had Camilla seen!
" I had not then my honour's victim been:
" I must be honest, yet I know not how,—
" 'T is crime to break, and death to keep my vow."

Sir Owen closely watch'd both maid and man,
And saw with joy proceed his cruel plan:
Then gave his praise—" She has it—has it deep
" In her capricious heart,—it murders sleep;
" You see the looks that grieve, you see the eyes
that weep;
" Now breathe again, dear youth, the kindling
fire,
" And let her feel what she could once inspire."

Alas! obedience was an easy task,
So might he cherish what he meant to ask;
He ventured soon, for Love prepared his way,
He sought occasion, he forbade delay;
In spite of vow foregone he taught the youth
The looks of passion and the words of truth;
In spite of woman's caution, doubt, and fear,
He bade her credit all she wish'd to hear;
An honest passion ruled in either breast,
And both believed the truth that both profess'd.

But now, 'mid all her new-born hopes, the eyes
Of fair Camilla saw through all disguise,
Reserve, and apprehension. Charles, who now
Grieved for his duty, and abhorr'd his vow,
Told the full fact, and it endear'd him more;
She felt her power, and pardon'd all he swore,

Since to his vow he could his wish prefer,
And loved the man who gave his world for her.

What must they do, and how their work begin?
Can they that temper to their wishes win?
They tried, they fail'd; and all they did t' assuage
The tempest of his soul provoked his rage;
The uncle met the youth with angry look,
And cried, "Remember, sir, the oath you took;
"You have my pity, Charles, but nothing more,
"Death, and death only, shall her peace restore;
"And am I dying?—I shall live to view
"The harlot's sorrow, and enjoy it too.

"How! words offend you? I have borne for years
"Unheeded anguish, shed derided tears,
"Felt scorn in every look, endured the stare
"Of wondering fools who never felt a care;
"On me all eyes were fix'd, and I the while
"Sustain'd the insult of a rival's smile.
"And shall I now—entangled thus my foe—
"My honest vengeance for a boy forego?
"A boy forewarn'd, forearm'd? Shall this be borne,
"And I be cheated, Charles, and thou forsworn?
"Hope not, I say, for thou mayst change as well
"The sentence graven on the gates of hell—
"'Here bid adieu to hope,—here hopeless beings dwell.'

"But does she love thee, Charles? I cannot live
"Dishonour'd, unrevenged—I may forgive,
"But to thy oath I bind thee; on thy soul
"Seek not my injured spirit to control;
"Seek not to soften, I am hard of heart,
"Harden'd by insult:—leave her now, and part,
"And let me know she grieves, while I enjoy her smart."

Charles first in anger to the knight replied,
Then felt the clog upon his soul, and sigh'd;
To his obedience made his wishes stoop,
And now admitted, now excluded hope;
As lovers do, he saw a prospect fair,
And then so dark, he sank into despair.

The uncle grieved; he even told the youth
That he was sorry, and it seem'd a truth;
But though it vex'd, it varied not his mind,
He bound himself, and would his nephew bind.
"I told him this, placed danger in his view,
"Bade him be certain, bound him to be true;
"And shall I now my purposes reject,
"Because my warnings were of no effect?"
Thus felt Sir Owen as a man whose cause
Is very good—it had his own applause.

Our knight a tenant had in high esteem,
His constant boast, when justice was his theme:
He praised the farmer's sense, his shrewd discourse,
Free without rudeness, manly, and not coarse;
As farmer, tenant, nay, as man, the knight
Thought Ellis all that is approved and right;
Then he was happy, and some envy drew
For knowing more than other farmers knew;
They call'd him learned, and it soothed their pride,
While he in his was pleased and gratified.

Still more t' offend, he to the altar led
The vicar's niece, to early reading bred;
Who, though she freely ventured on the life,
Could never fully be the farmer's wife;
She had a softness, gentleness, and ease,
Sure a coarse mind to humble and displease;
Oh! had she never known a fault beside,
How vain their spite, how impotent their pride!

Three darling girls the happy couple bless'd,
Who now the sweetest lot of life possess'd;
For what can more a grateful spirit move
Than health with competence, and peace with love?

Ellis would sometimes, thriving man! retire
To the town inn, and quit the parlour fire;
But he was ever kind where'er he went,
And trifling sums in his amusement spent;
He bought, he thought for her—she should have been content:
Oft, when he cash received at Smithfield mart,
At Cranbourn-alley he would leave a part;
And, if to town he follow'd what he sold,
Sure was his wife a present to behold.

Still, when his evenings at the inn were spent,
She mused at home in sullen discontent;
And, sighing, yielded to a wish that some
With social spirit to the farm would come:
There was a farmer in the place, whose name,
And skill in rural arts, were known to fame:
He had a pupil, by his landlord sent,
On terms that gave the parties much content;
The youth those arts, and those alone, should learn,—
With aught beside his guide had no concern:
He might to neighb'ring towns or distant ride,
And there amusements seek without a guide;
With handsome prints his private room was graced,
His music there, and there his books were placed:
Men knew not if he farm'd, but they allow'd him taste.

Books, prints, and music cease at times to charm,
And sometimes men can neither ride nor farm;
They look for kindred minds, and Cecil found,
In Farmer Ellis, one inform'd and sound;
But in his wife—I hate the fact I tell—
A lovely being, who could please too well;
And he was one who never would deny
Himself a pleasure, or indeed would try.

Early and well the wife of Ellis knew
Where danger was, and trembled at the view;
So evil spirits tremble, but are still
Evil, and lose not the rebellious will:
She sought not safety from the fancied crime,
"And why retreat before the dangerous time?"

Oft came the student of the farm and read;
And found his mind with more than reading fed:
This Ellis seeing, left them, or he stay'd,
As pleased him, not offended nor afraid:
He came in spirits with his girls to play,
Then ask excuse, and, laughing, walk away:
When, as he enter'd, Cecil ceased to read,
He would exclaim, "Proceed, my friend, proceed!"
Or, sometimes weary, would to bed retire,
And fear and anger by his ease inspire.

"My conversation does he then despise?
"Leaves he this slighted face for other eyes?"
So said Alicia; and she dwelt so long
Upon that thought, to leave her was to wrong.

Alas! the woman loved the soothing tongue
That yet pronounced her beautiful and young;
The tongue that, seeming careless, ever praised;
The eye that roving, on her person gazed;
The ready service, on the watch to please;
And all such sweet, small courtesies as these.

Still there was virtue, but a rolling stone
On a hill's brow is not more quickly gone:
The slightest motion,—ceasing from our care,—
A moment's absence,—when we're not aware,—
When down it rolls, and at the bottom lies,
Sunk, lost, degraded, never more to rise!
Far off the glorious height from whence it fell,
With all things base and infamous to dwell.

Friendship with woman is a dangerous thing—
Thence hopes avow'd and bold confessions spring;
Frailties confess'd to other frailties lead,
And new confessions new desires succeed;
And, when the friends have thus their hearts disclosed,
They find how little is to guilt opposed.
The foe's attack will on the fort begin,
When he is certain of a friend within.

When all was lost,—or, in the lover's sight,
When all was won,—the lady thought of flight.

"What! sink a slave?" she said, "and with deceit
"The rigid virtue of a husband meet?
"No! arm'd with death, I would his fury brave,
"And own the justice of the blow he gave!
"But thus to see him easy, careless, cold,
"And his confiding folly to behold—
"To feel incessant fears that he should read,
"In looks assumed, the cause whence they proceed,
"I cannot brook; nor will I here abide
"Till chance betrays the crime that shame would hide:"
"Fly with me, Henry!" Henry sought in vain
To soothe her terrors and her griefs restrain:
He saw the lengths that woman dared to go,
And fear'd the husband both as friend and foe.
Of farming weary—for the guilty mind
Can no resource in guiltless studies find—
Left to himself, his mother all unknown,
His titled father, loth the boy to own,
Had him to decent expectations bred,
A favour'd offspring of a lawless bed;
And would he censure one who should pursue
The way he took? Alicia yet was new:
Her passion pleased him: he agreed on flight:
They fix'd the method, and they chose the night.

Then, while the Farmer read of public crimes,
Collating coolly Chronicles and Times,
The flight was taken by the guilty pair,
That made one passage in the columns there.

The heart of Ellis bled; the comfort, pride,
The hope and stay of his existence died;
Rage from the ruin of his peace arose,
And he would follow and destroy his foes;
Would with wild haste the guilty pair pursue,
And when he found—Good Heaven! what would he do?

That wretched woman he would wildly seize,
And agonise her heart, his own to ease;
That guilty man would grasp, and in her sight
Insult his pangs, and her despair excite;
Bring death in view, and then the stroke suspend,
And draw out tortures till his life should end:
Oh! it should stand recorded in all time,
How they transgress'd, and he avenged the crime!
In this bad world should all his business cease,
He would not seek—he would not taste of peace;
But wrath should live till vengeance had her due,
And with his wrath his life should perish too.

His girls—not his—he would not be so weak—
Child was a word he never more must speak!
How did he know what villains had defiled
His honest bed?—he spurn'd the name of child;
Keep them he must; but he would coarsely hide
Their forms, and nip the growth of woman's pride;
He would consume their flesh, abridge their food,
And kill the mother-vices in their blood.

All this Sir Owen heard, and grieved for all;
He with the husband mourn'd Alicia's fall;
But urged the vengeance with a spirit strong,
As one whose own rose high against the wrong:
He saw his tenant by this passion moved,
Shared in his wrath, and his revenge approved.

Years now unseen, he mourn'd this tenant's fate,
And wonder'd how he bore his widow'd state:
Still he would mention Ellis with the pride
Of one who felt himself to worth allied:
Such were his notions—had been long, but now
He wish'd to see if vengeance lived, and how:
He doubted not a mind so strong must feel
Most righteously, and righteous measures deal.

Then would he go, and haply he might find
Some new excitement for a weary mind—
Might learn the miseries of a pair undone,
One scorn'd and hated, lost and perish'd one;
Yes, he would praise to virtuous anger give,
And so his vengeance should be nursed and live.

Ellis was glad to see his landlord come,
A transient joy broke in upon his gloom,
And pleased he led the knight to the superior room,

Where she was wont in happier days to sit,
Who paid with smiles his condescending wit.
There the sad husband, who had seldom been
Where prints acquired in happier days were seen,
Now struck by these, and carried to the past,
A painful look on every object cast:
Sir Owen saw his tenant's troubled state,
But still he wish'd to know the offenders' fate.

"Know you they suffer, Ellis?"—Ellis knew;—
"'T is well! 't is just! but have they all their due?
"Have they in mind and body, head and heart,
"Sustain'd the pangs of their accursed part?"
"They have!"—"'T is well!" "And wants enough to shake
"The firmest mind, the stoutest heart to break."
"But have you seen them in such misery dwell?"—
"In misery past description."—"That is well."

"Alas! Sir Owen, it perhaps is just,—
"Yet I began my purpose to distrust;
"For they to justice have discharged a debt,
"That vengeance surely may her claim forget."

"Man! can you pity?"—"As a man I feel
"Miseries like theirs."—
"But never would you heal?"

"Hear me, Sir Owen! I had sought them long,
"Urged by the pain of ever-present wrong,
"Yet had not seen; and twice the year came round—
"Years hateful now—ere I my victims found;
"But I did find them, in the dungeon's gloom
"Of a small garret—a precarious home;
"For that depended on the weekly pay,
"And they were sorely frighten'd on the day;
"But there they linger'd on from week to week,
"Haunted by ills of which 't is hard to speak,
"For they are many and vexatious all,
"The very smallest—but they none were small.

"The roof, unceil'd in patches, gave the snow
"Entrance within, and there were heaps below;
"I pass'd a narrow region dark and cold,
"The strait of stairs to that infectious hold;
"And, when I enter'd, misery met my view
"In every shape she wears, in every hue;
"And the black icy blast across the dungeon flew.
"There frown'd the ruin'd walls that once were white;
"There gleam'd the panes that once admitted light;
"There lay unsavoury scraps of wretched food;
"And there a measure, void of fuel, stood.
"But who shall part by part describe the state
"Of these, thus follow'd by relentless fate?
"All, too, in winter, when the icy air
"Breathed its bleak venom on the guilty pair.

"That man, that Cecil!—he was left, it seems,
"Unnamed, unnoticed: farewell to his dreams!
"Heirs made by law rejected him of course,
"And left him neither refuge nor resource."

"Their father's?"—
"No: he was the harlot's son
"Who wrong'd them, whom their duty bade them shun;
"And they were duteous all, and he was all undone.

"Now the lost pair, whom better times had led
"To part disputing, shared their sorrow's bed;
"Their bed!—I shudder as I speak—and shared
"Scraps to their hunger by the hungry spared."

"Man! my good Ellis! can you sigh?"—
"I can;
"In short, Sir Owen, I must feel as man;
"And could you know the miseries they endured,
"The poor, uncertain pittance they procured,
"When, laid aside the needle and the pen,
"Their sickness won the neighbours of their den,
"Poor as they are, and they are passing poor,
"To lend some aid to those who needed more:
"Then, too, an ague with the winter came,
"And, in this state, that wife I cannot name
"Brought forth a famish'd child of suffering and of shame.

"This had you known, and traced them to this scene,
"Where all was desolate, defiled, unclean,
"A fireless room, and, where a fire had place,
"The blast loud howling down the empty space,
"You must have felt a part of the distress,
"Forgot your wrongs, and made their suffering less!"

"Sought you them, Ellis, from the mean intent
"To give them succour?"
"What, indeed, I meant
"At first was vengeance; but I long pursued
"The pair, and I at last their misery view'd
"In that vile garret, which I cannot paint—
"The sight was loathsome, and the smell was faint;
"And there that wife—whom I had loved so well
"And thought so happy—was condemn'd to dwell;
"The gay, the grateful wife, whom I was glad
"To see in dress beyond our station clad,
"And to behold among our neighbours fine,
"More than perhaps became a wife of mine:
"And now among her neighbours to explore,
"And see her poorest of the very poor!—

"I would describe it, but I bore a part,
"Nor can explain the feelings of the heart;
"Yet memory since has aided me to trace
"The horrid features of that dismal place.
"There she reclined unmoved, her bosom bare
"To her companion's unimpassion'd stare,
"And my wild wonder:—Seat of virtue! chaste
"As lovely once! O! how wert thou disgraced!
"Upon that breast, by sordid rags defiled,
"Lay the wan features of a famish'd child;—
"That sin-born babe in utter misery laid,
"Too feebly wretched even to cry for aid;
"The ragged sheeting, o'er her person drawn,
"Served for the dress that hunger placed in pawn.

" At the bed's feet the man reclined his frame:
" Their chairs were perish'd to support the flame,
" That warm'd his agued limbs, and, sad to see,
" That shook him fiercely as he gazed on me.

" I was confused in this unhappy view:
" My wife! my friend! I could not think it true;
" My children's mother,—my Alicia,—laid
" On such a bed! so wretched,—so afraid!
" And her gay, young seducer, in the guise
" Of all we dread, abjure, defy, despise,
" And all the fear and terror in his look,
" Still more my mind to its foundation shook.

" At last he spoke:—'Long since I would have died,
" 'But could not leave her, though for death I sigh'd,
" 'And tried the poison'd cup, and dropp'd it as I tried.
" 'She is a woman, and that famish'd thing
" 'Makes her to life, with all its evils, cling:
" 'Feed her, and let her breathe her last in peace,
" 'And all my sufferings with your promise cease!'

" Ghastly he smiled:—I knew not what I felt,
" But my heart melted—hearts of flint would melt,
" To see their anguish, penury, and shame,
" How base, how low, how grovelling they became:
" I could not speak my purpose, but my eyes
" And my expression bade the creature rise.

" Yet, O! that woman's look! my words are vain
" Her mix'd and troubled feelings to explain;
" True, there was shame and consciousness of fall,
" But yet remembrance of my love withal,
" And knowledge of that power which she would now recall.

" But still the more that she to memory brought,
" The greater anguish in my mind was wrought:
" The more she tried to bring the past in view,
" She greater horror on the present threw;
" So that, for love or pity, terror thrill'd
" My blood, and vile and odious thoughts instill'd.

" This war within, these passions in their strife,
" If thus protracted, had exhausted life;
" But the strong view of these departed years
" Caused a full burst of salutary tears,
" And as I wept at large, and thought alone,
" I felt my reason re-ascend her throne."

" My friend!" Sir Owen answer'd, "what became
" Of your just anger?—when you saw their shame,
" It was your triumph, and you should have shown
" Strength, if not joy—their sufferings were their own."

" Alas, for them! their own in very deed!
" And they of mercy had the greater need;
" Their own by purchase, for their frailty paid,—
" And wanted Heaven's own justice human aid?
" And seeing this, could I beseech my God
" For deeper misery, and a heavier rod?"

" But could you help them?"
" Think, Sir Owen, how
" I saw them then—methinks I see them now!
" She had not food, nor aught a mother needs,
" Who for another life and dearer feeds:
" I saw her speechless; on her wither'd breast
" The wither'd child extended, but not press'd,
" Who sought, with moving lip and feeble cry,—
" Vain instinct!—for the fount without supply.

" Sure it was all a grievous, odious scene,
" Where all was dismal, melancholy, mean,
" Foul with compell'd neglect, unwholesome, and unclean;
" That arm,—that eye,—the cold, the sunken cheek,—
" Spoke all, Sir Owen—fiercely miseries speak!"

" And you relieved?"
" If hell's seducing crew
" Had seen that sight, they must have pitied too."

" Revenge was thine—thou hadst the power, the right;
" To give it up was Heaven's own act to slight."

" Tell me not, sir, of rights, and wrongs, or powers!
" I felt it written—Vengeance is not ours!"

" Well, Ellis, well!—I find these female foes,
" Or good or ill, will murder our repose;
" And we, when Satan tempts them, take the cup,
" The fruit of their foul sin, and drink it up:
" But shall our pity all our claims remit,
" And we the sinners of their guilt acquit?"

" And what, Sir Owen, will our vengeance do?
" It follows us when we our foe pursue,
" And, as we strike the blow, it smites the smiters too."

" What didst thou, man?"
" I brought them to a cot
" Behind your larches,—a sequester'd spot,
" Where dwells the woman: I believe her mind
" Is now enlighten'd—I am sure resign'd:
" She gave her infant, though with aching heart
" And faltering spirit, to be nursed apart."

" And that vile scoundrel——"
" Nay, his name restore,
" And call him Cecil,—for he is no more:
" When my vain help was offer'd, he was past
" All human aid, and shortly breathed his last;
" But his heart open'd, and he lived to see
" Guilt in himself, and find a friend in me.

" Strange was their parting, parting on the day
" I offer'd help, and took the man away,
" Sure not to meet again, and not to live
" And taste of joy.—He feebly cried, 'Forgive!
" 'I have thy guilt, thou mine; but now adieu!
" 'Tempters and tempted! what will thence ensue
" 'I know not, dare not think.'—He said, and he withdrew."

" But, Ellis, tell me, didst thou thus desire
" To heap upon their heads those coals of fire ?"

" If fire to melt, that feeling is confess'd,—
" If fire to shame, I let that question rest;
" But if aught more the sacred words imply,
" I know it not—no commentator I."

" Then did you freely from your soul forgive ?"—
" Sure as I hope before my Judge to live,
" Sure as I trust his mercy to receive,
" Sure as his word I honour and believe,
" Sure as the Saviour died upon the tree
" For all who sin,—for that dear wretch and me,—
" Whom never more on earth will I forsake or see." [3]

Sir Owen softly to his bed adjourn'd,
Sir Owen quickly to his home return'd;
And all the way he meditating dwelt
On what this man in his affliction felt,—
How he, resenting first, forbore, forgave,
His passion's lord, and not his anger's slave:
And as he rode he seem'd to fear the deed
Should not be done, and urged unwonted speed.

Arrived at home, he scorn'd the change to hide,
Nor would indulge a mean and selfish pride,
That would some little at a time recall
Th' avenging vow; he now was frankness all:
He saw his nephew, and with kindness spoke:—
" Charles, I repent my purpose, and revoke;
" Take her—I 'm taught, and would I could repay
" The generous teacher; hear me, and obey:
" Bring me the dear coquette, and let me vow
" On lips half perjured to be passive now:
" Take her, and let me thank the powers divine
" She was not stolen when her hand was mine,
" Or when her heart—Her smiles I must forget,
" She my revenge, and cancel either debt."

Here ends our tale, for who will doubt the bliss
Of ardent lovers in a case like this ?
And if Sir Owen's was not half so strong,
It may, perchance, continue twice as long.

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[3] ["In the hands of ordinary writers, tales of seduction are such maudlin things, that one almost loses his horror for the wretched criminals in pity of the still more wretched writers. But Crabbe bears us down with him into the depths of agony, and terrifies us with a holy fear of the punishment which even on earth eats into the adulterer's heart. The story of Farmer Ellis might, we think, have stood by itself, instead of being introduced merely as part of another story; but Mr. Crabbe very frequently brings forward his very finest things as illustrations of others of inferior interest, or as accessaries to less meritorious matter. Farmer Ellis is but a homely person, it is true; but he is an Englishman, and he behaves like one, with the dagger of grief festering in his heart. Nothing can be more affecting than his conduct in granting an asylum in a lonely spot on his own grounds to the repentant wretch who had once been so dear to him—a sanctuary, as it were, where she may live within the protection of her husband's humanity, though for ever divorced from his love—and where the melancholy man knows that she is making her peace with God, in a calm haven provided for her against the waves of the world by him whose earthly happiness she had for ever destroyed. This is somewhat superior to Kotzebue's Stranger and Mrs. Haller! Never did a more sublime moral belong to a tale of guilt."—WILSON.]

BOOK XIII.

DELAY HAS DANGER.

Morning Excursion—Lady at Silford, who?—Reflections on Delay—Cecilia and Henry—The Lovers contracted—Visit to the Patron—Whom he finds there—Fanny described—The yielding of Vanity—Delay—Resentment—Want of Resolution—Further Entanglement—Danger—How met—Conclusion.

THREE weeks had pass'd, and Richard rambles now
Far as the dinners of the day allow;
He rode to Farley Grange and Finley Mere,
That house so ancient, and that lake so clear:
He rode to Ripley through that river gay,
Where in the shallow stream the loaches play,
And stony fragments stay the winding stream,
And gilded pebbles at the bottom gleam,
Giving their yellow surface to the sun,
And making proud the waters as they run:
It is a lovely place, and at the side
Rises a mountain-rock in rugged pride;
And in that rock are shapes of shells, and forms
Of creatures in old worlds, of nameless worms,
Whose generations lived and died ere man,
A worm of other class, to crawl began.[1]

There is a town call'd Silford, where his steed
Our traveller rested,—he the while would feed
His mind by walking to and fro, to meet,
He knew not what adventure, in the street:
A stranger there, but yet a window-view
Gave him a face that he conceived he knew;
He saw a tall, fair, lovely lady, dress'd
As one whom taste and wealth had jointly bless'd;
He gazed, but soon a footman at the door
Thundering, alarm'd her, who was seen no more.

" This was the lady whom her lover bound
" In solemn contract, and then proved unsound:
" Of this affair I have a clouded view,
" And should be glad to have it clear'd by you."

So Richard spake, and instant George replied,
" I had the story from the injured side,
" But when resentment and regret were gone,
" And pity (shaded by contempt) came on.

" Frail was the hero of my tale, but still
" Was rather drawn by accident than will.

[1] [" The introduction to this story is in Mr. Crabbe's best style of concise and minute description."—JEFFREY.]

" Some without meaning into guilt advance,
" From want of guard, from vanity, from chance;
" Man's weakness flies his more immediate pain,
" A little respite from his fears to gain;
" And takes the part that he would gladly fly,
" If he had strength and courage to deny.

" But now my tale,—and let the moral say,
" When hope can sleep, there 's Danger in Delay.
" Not that for rashness, Richard, I would plead,
" For unadvised alliance: no, indeed:
" Think ere the contract—but, contracted, stand
" No more debating, take the ready hand:
" When hearts are willing, and when fears subside,
" Trust not to time, but let the knot be tied;
" For when a lover has no more to do,
" He thinks in leisure, what shall I pursue?
" And then who knows what objects come in view?
" For when, assured, the man has nought to keep
" His wishes warm and active, then they sleep:
" Hopes die with fears; and then a man must lose
" All the gay visions, and delicious views,
" Once his mind's wealth! He travels at his ease,
" Nor horrors now nor fairy-beauty sees:
" When the kind goddess gives the wish'd assent,
" No mortal business should the deed prevent;
" But the bless'd youth should legal sanction seek
" Ere yet th' assenting blush has fled the cheek.

" And—hear me, Richard,—man has reptile-pride
" That often rises when his fears subside;
" When, like a trader feeling rich, he now
" Neglects his former smile, his humble bow,
" And, conscious of his hoarded wealth, assumes
" New airs, nor thinks how odious he becomes.

" There is a wandering, wavering train of thought,
" That something seeks where nothing should be sought,
" And will a self-delighted spirit move
" To dare the danger of pernicious love.

" First be it granted all was duly said
" By the fond youth to the believing maid;
" Let us suppose with many a sigh there came
" The declaration of the deathless flame;[2]—
" And so her answer—' She was happy then,
" ' Bless'd in herself, and did not think of men;
" ' And with such comforts in her present state,
" ' A wish to change it was to tempt her fate:
" ' That she would not; but yet she would confess
" ' With him she thought her hazard would be less;
" ' Nay, more, she would esteem, she would regard express;
" ' But to be brief—if he could wait and see
" ' In a few years what his desires would be.' "

Henry, for years, read months, then weeks, nor found
The lady thought his judgment was unsound;
" For months read weeks," she read it to his praise,
And had some thoughts of changing it to *days*.

And here a short excursion let me make,
A lover tried, I think, for lovers' sake;
And teach the meaning in a lady's mind
When you can none in her expressions find:
Words are design'd that meaning to convey,
But often *Yea* is hidden in a *Nay!*
And what the charmer wills, some gentle hints betray.
Then, too, when ladies mean to yield at length,
They match their reasons with the lover's strength,
And, kindly cautious, will no force employ
But such as he can baffle or destroy.

As when heroic lovers beauty woo'd,
And were by magic's mighty art withstood,
The kind historian, for the dame afraid,
Gave to the faithful knight the stronger aid.

A downright *No!* would make a man despair,
Or leave for kinder nymph the cruel fair;
But " *No!* because I 'm very happy now,
" Because I dread th' irrevocable vow,
" Because I fear papa will not approve,
" Because I love not—no, I cannot love;
" Because you men of Cupid make a jest,
" Because—in short, a single life is best."
A *No!* when back'd by reasons of such force,
Invites approach, and will recede of course.

Ladies, like towns besieged, for honour's sake,
Will some defence, or its appearance, make;
On first approach there 's much resistance made,
And conscious weakness hides in bold parade;
With lofty looks, and threat'nings stern and proud,
" Come, if you dare," is said in language loud,
But if th' attack be made with care and skill,
" Come," says the yielding party, " if you will."
Then each the other's valiant acts approve,
And twine their laurels in a wreath of love.

[2] [The tale in the original MS. opens thus:—

" Is there not Danger when a lover gains
" His lady's heart, and her consent obtains?
" (Suppose their union for a while delay'd,
" As when a flinching father is afraid)
" Now when the youth upon his labours past
" Delighted looks, and is in peace at last,
" Is there not Danger in those days of peace,
" When troubles lessen, and when terrors cease,
" Lest, from the love of novelty, the sin
" Of changeful man, some wandering should begin?
" Lest a successful spirit, in its pride,
" Should not contented with its peace abide?

" Not Troilus more true or fond could be,
" Not Orpheus to his lost Eurydice,
" Than to his Harriet Henry—all was done
" On either part, and either heart was won:
" For there had pass'd the lady's wish to charm
" With due success; the lover felt th' alarm;
" Then, more emotion in the man t' excite,
" There pass'd in her the momentary slight;
" Then, after many a tender fear, there came
" A declaration of the deathless flame," &c.]

We now retrace our tale, and forward go,—
Thus Henry rightly read Cecilia's *No!*
His prudent father, who had duly weigh'd
And well approved the fortune of the maid,
Not much resisted, just enough to show
He knew his power, and would his son should know.

" Harry, I will, while I your bargain make,
" That you a journey to our patron take:
" I know her guardian; care will not become
" A lad when courting; as you must be dumb,
" You may be absent; I for you will speak,
" And ask what you are not supposed to seek."[2]

Then came the parting hour, and what arise
When lovers part! expressive looks and eyes,
Tender and tearful, many a fond adieu,
And many a call the sorrow to renew;
Sighs such as lovers only can explain,
And words that they might undertake in vain.

Cecilia liked it not; she had, in truth,
No mind to part with her enamour'd youth:
But thought it foolish thus themselves to cheat,
And part for nothing but again to meet.

Now Henry's father was a man whose heart
Took with his interest a decided part;
He knew his lordship, and was known for acts
That I omit,—they were acknowledged facts;
An interest somewhere—I the place forget,
And the good deed—no matter—'t was a debt:
Thither must Henry, and in vain the maid
Express'd dissent—the father was obey'd.

But though the maid was by her fears assail'd,
Her reason rose against them, and prevail'd;
Fear saw him hunting, leaping, falling—led,
Maim'd and disfigured, groaning to his bed;
Saw him in perils, duels,—dying,—dead.
But Prudence answer'd, " Is not every maid
" With equal cause for him she loves afraid?"
And from her guarded mind Cecilia threw
The groundless terrors that will love pursue.

She had no doubts, and her reliance strong
Upon the honour that she would not wrong:
Firm in herself, she doubted not the truth
Of him, the chosen, the selected youth;
Trust of herself a trust in him supplied,
And she believed him faithful, though untried:
On her he might depend, in him she would confide.
If some fond girl express'd a tender pain
Lest some fair rival should allure her swain,
To such she answer'd with a look severe,
" Can one you doubt be worthy of your fear?"

My lord was kind,—a month had pass'd away,
And Henry stay'd,—he sometimes named a day;
But still my lord was kind, and Henry still must stay:
His father's words to him were words of fate—
" Wait, 't is your duty; 't is my pleasure, wait!"

In all his walks, in hilly heath or wood,
Cecilia's form the pensive youth pursued;
In the grey morning, in the silent noon,
In the soft twilight, by the sober moon,
In those forsaken rooms, in that immense saloon;
And he, now fond of that seclusion grown,
There reads her letters, and there writes his own.
" Here none approach," said he, " to interfere,
" But I can think of my Cecilia here!"[3]

But there did come—and how it came to pass
Who shall explain?—a mild and blue-eyed lass;—
It was the work of accident, no doubt—
The cause unknown—we say, " as things fall out;"
The damsel enter'd there, in wandering round about:
At first she saw not Henry; and she ran,
As from a ghost, when she beheld a man.

She was esteem'd a beauty through the Hall,
And so admitted, with consent of all;
And like a treasure was her beauty kept
From every guest who in the mansion slept,
Whether as friends who join'd the noble pair,
Or those invited by the steward there.

She was the daughter of a priest, whose life
Was brief and sad: he lost a darling wife,
And Fanny then her father, who could save
But a small portion; but his all he gave,
With the fair orphan, to a sister's care,
And her good spouse: they were the ruling pair—
Steward and steward's lady—o'er a tribe,
Each under each, whom I shall not describe.

This grave old couple, childless and alone,
Would, by their care, for Fanny's loss atone:
She had been taught in schools of honest fame;
And to the Hall, as to a home, she came,
My lord assenting: yet, as meet and right,
Fanny was held from every hero's sight,
Who might in youthful error cast his eyes
On one so gentle as a lawful prize,
On border land, whom, as their right or prey,
A youth from either side might bear away.
Some handsome lover of th' inferior class
Might as a wife approve the lovely lass;
Or some invader from the class above,
Who, more presuming, would his passion prov
By asking less—love only for his love.

This much experienced aunt her fear express'd,
And dread of old and young, of host and guest.
" Go not, my Fanny, in their way," she cried,
" It is not right that virtue should be tried;
" So, to be safe, be ever at my side."
She was not ever at that side; but still
Observ'd her precepts, and obey'd her will.

But in the morning's dawn and evening's gloom
She could not lock the damsel in her room;
And Fanny thought, " I will ascend these stairs
" To see the chapel,—there are none at prayers;
" None," she believed, " had yet to dress return'd,
" By whom a timid girl might be discern'd:"

[3] [MS.—" Here none approach to laugh, to sing, to prate;
" Here I can mourn, and muse, and meditate."]

In her slow motion, looking, as she glides,
On pictures, busts, and what she met besides,
And speaking softly to herself alone,
Or singing low in melancholy tone;
And thus she rambled through the still domain,
Room after room, again, and yet again.

But, to retrace our story, still we say,
To this saloon the maiden took her way;
Where she beheld our Youth, and frighten'd ran,
And so their friendship in her fear began.

But dare she thither once again advance,
And still suppose the man will think it chance?
Nay, yet again, and what has chance to do
With this?—I know not: doubtless Fanny knew.

Now, of the meeting of a modest maid
And sober youth why need we be afraid?
And when a girl's amusements are so few
As Fanny's were, what would you have her do?
Reserved herself, a decent youth to find,
And just be civil, sociable, and kind,
And look together at the setting sun,
Then at each other—what the evil done?

Then Fanny took my little lord to play,
And bade him not intrude on Henry's way:
" O, he intrudes not!" said the Youth, and grew
Fond of the child, and would amuse him too;
Would make such faces, and assume such looks—
He loved it better than his gayest books.

When man with man would an acquaintance seek,
He will his thoughts in chosen language speak;
And they converse on divers themes, to find
If they possess a corresponding mind;
But man with woman has foundation laid,
And built up friendship, ere a word is said:
'T is not with words that they their wishes tell,
But with a language answering quite as well;
And thus they find, when they begin t' explore
Their way by speech, they knew it all before.

And now it chanced again the pair, when dark,
Met in their way when wandering in the park;
Not in the common path, for so they might,
Without a wonder, wander day or night;
But, when in pathless ways their chance will bring
A musing pair, we do admire the thing.

The Youth in meeting read the damsel's face,
As if he meant her inmost thoughts to trace:
On which her colour changed, as if she meant
To give her aid, and help his kind intent.

Both smiled and parted, but they did not speak—
The smile implied, "Do tell me what you seek:"
They took their different ways with erring feet,
And meet again, surprised that they could meet:
Then must they speak—and something of the air
Is always ready—" 'T is extremely fair!"

" It was so pleasant!" Henry said, " the beam
" Of that sweet light so brilliant on the stream;
" And chiefly yonder, where that old cascade
" Has for an age its simple music made;
" All so delightful, soothing, and serene!
" Do you not feel it? not enjoy the scene?
" Something it has that words will not express,
" But rather hide, and make th' enjoyment less:
" 'T is what our souls conceive, 't is what our hearts confess."

Poor Fanny's heart at these same words confess'd
How well he painted, and how rightly guess'd;
And, while they stood admiring their retreat,
Henry found something like a mossy seat;
But Fanny sat not; no, she rather pray'd
That she might leave him, she was so afraid.

" Not, sir, of you; your goodness I can trust,
" But folks are so censorious and unjust,
" They make no difference, they pay no regard
" To our true meaning, which is very hard
" And very cruel; great the pain it cost
" To lose such pleasure, but it must be lost;
" Did people know how free from thought of ill
" One's meaning is, their malice would be still."

At this she wept; at least a glittering gem
Shone in each eye, and there was fire in them,
For, as they fell, the sparkles, at his feet,
He felt emotions very warm and sweet.
" A lovely creature! not more fair than good,
" By all admired, by some, it seems, pursued,
" Yet self-protected by her virtue's force
" And conscious truth—What evil in discourse
" With one so guarded, who is pleased to trust
" Herself with me, reliance strong and just?"

Our lover then believed he must not seem
Cold to the maid who gave him her esteem:
Not manly this; Cecilia had his heart,
But it was lawful with his time to part;
It would be wrong in her to take amiss
A virtuous friendship for a girl like this;
False or disloyal he would never prove,
But kindness here took nothing from his love:
Soldiers to serve a foreign prince are known,
When not on present duty to their own;
So, though our bosom's queen we still prefer,
We are not always on our knees to her.
" Cecilia present, witness yon fair moon,
" And yon bright orbs, that fate would change as soon
" As my devotion; but the absent sun
" Cheers us no longer when his course is run;
" And then those starry twinklers may obtain
" A little worship till he shines again."

The father still commanded, " Wait a while,"
And the son answer'd in submissive style,
Grieved, but obedient; and obedience teased
His lady's spirit more than grieving pleased;
That he should grieve in absence was most fit,
But not that he to absence should submit;
And in her letters might be traced reproof,
Distant indeed, but visible enough;
This should the wandering of his heart have stay'd:
Alas! the wanderer was the vainer made.

The parties daily met, as by consent,
And yet it always seem'd by accident;
Till in the nymph the shepherd had been blind
If he had fail'd to see a manner kind,
With that expressive look that seem'd to say,
" You do not speak, and yet you see you may."

O, yes, he saw, and he resolved to fly,
And blamed his heart, unwilling to comply:
He sometimes wonder'd how it came to pass
That he had all this freedom with the lass;
Reserved, herself, with strict attention kept,
And care and vigilance that never slept:
" How is it thus that they a beauty trust
" With me, who feel the confidence is just?
" And they, too, feel it; yes, they may confide,"—
He said in folly, and he smiled in pride.
'T is thus our secret passions work their way,
And the poor victims know not they obey.

Familiar now became the wandering pair,
And there was pride and joy in Fanny's air;
For though his silence did not please the maid,
She judged him only modest and afraid:
The gentle dames are ever pleased to find
Their lovers dreading they should prove unkind;
So, blind by hope, and pleased with prospects gay,
The generous beauty gave her heart away
Before he said, "I love!"—alas! he dared not say.

Cecilia yet was mistress of his mind,
But oft he wish'd her, like his Fanny, kind;
Her fondness soothed him, for the man was vain,
And he perceived that he could give her pain:
Cecilia liked not to profess her love,
But Fanny ever was the yielding dove;
Tender and trusting, waiting for the word,
And then prepared to hail her bosom's lord.

Cecilia once her honest love avow'd,
To make him happy, not to make him proud:
But she would not, for every asking sigh,
Confess the flame that waked his vanity;
But this poor maiden, every day and hour,
Would by fresh kindness feed the growing power;
And he indulged—vain being!—in the joy,
That he alone could raise it, or destroy:
A present good, from which he dared not fly,
Cecilia absent, and his Fanny by.

O! vain desire of youth, that in the hour
Of strong temptation, when he feels the power,
And knows how daily his desires increase,
Yet will he wait, and sacrifice his peace,
Will trust to chance to free him from the snare,
Of which long since his conscience said, Beware;
Or look for strange deliverance from that ill,
That he might fly, could he command the will!
How can he freedom from the future seek,
Who feels already that he grows too weak?
And thus refuses to resist, till time
Removes the power, and makes the way for crime;
Yet thoughts he had, and he would think, " Forego
" My dear Cecilia? not for kingdoms! No!
" But may I, ought I not the friend to be
" Of one who feels this fond regard for me?
" I wrong no creature by a kindness lent
" To one so gentle, mild, and innocent:
" And for that fair one whom I still adore,
" By feeling thus I think of her the more;"
And not unlikely, for our thoughts will tend
To those whom we are conscious we offend.

Had Reason whisper'd, " Has Cecilia leave
" Some gentle youth in friendship to receive,
" And be to him the friend that you appear
" To this soft girl?—Would not some jealous fear
" Proclaim your thoughts that he approach'd too near?"

But Henry, blinded still, presumed to write
Of one in whom Cecilia would delight:
A mild and modest girl, a gentle friend,
If, as he hoped, her kindness would descend—
But what he fear'd to lose or hoped to gain
By writing thus, he had been ask'd in vain.

It was his purpose, every morn he rose,
The dangerous friendship he had made to close:
It was his torment nightly, ere he slept,
To feel his prudent purpose was not kept.
True, he has wonder'd why the timid maid
Meets him so often, and is not afraid;
And why that female dragon, fierce and keen,
Has never in their private walks been seen:
And often he has thought, " What can their silence mean?
" They can have no design, or plot, or plan,—
" In fact, I know not how the thing began;
" 'T is their dependence on my credit here,
" And fear not, nor, in fact, have cause to fear."

But did that pair, who seem'd to think that all
Unwatch'd will wander and unguarded fall,—
Did they permit a youth and maid to meet
Both unreproved? were they so indiscreet?

This sometimes enter'd Henry's mind, and then,
" Who shall account for women or for men?"
He said; " or who their secret thoughts explore?
" 'Why do I vex me? I will think no more."

My lord of late had said, in manner kind,
" My good friend Harry, do not think us blind!"
Letters had pass'd, though he had nothing seen,
His careful father and my lord between;
But to what purpose was to him unknown—
It might be borough business, or their own.
Fanny, it seem'd, was now no more in dread;
If one approach'd, she neither fear'd nor fled:
He mused on this,—" But wherefore her alarm?
" She knows me better, and she dreads no harm."

Something his father wrote that gave him pain:
" I know not, son, if you should yet remain;—
" Be cautious, Harry, favours to procure
" We strain a point, but we must first be sure:
" Love is a folly,—that, indeed, is true,—
" But something still is to our honour due,
" So I must leave the thing to my good lord and you."

But from Cecilia came remonstrance strong:—
" You write too darkly, and you stay too long;
" We hear reports; and, Henry, mark me well,—
" I heed not every tale that triflers tell;—

" Be you no trifler; dare not to believe
" That I am one whom words and vows deceive:
" You know your heart, your hazard you will learn,
" And this your trial:—instantly return."

" Unjust, injurious, jealous, cruel maid!
" Am I a slave, of haughty words afraid?
" Can she who thus commands expect to be obey'd?
" O! how unlike this dear assenting soul,
" Whose heart a man might at his will control!"

Uneasy, anxious, fill'd with self-reproof,
He now resolved to quit his patron's roof;
And then again his vacillating mind
To stay resolved, and that her pride should find:
Debating thus, his pen the lover took,
And chose the words of anger and rebuke.

Again, yet once again, the conscious pair
Met, and "O speak!" was Fanny's silent prayer;
And, "I must speak," said the embarrass'd youth;
" Must save my honour, must confess the truth:
" Then I must lose her; but, by slow degrees,
" She will regain her peace, and I my ease."

Ah! foolish man: to virtue true, nor vice,
He buys distress, and self-esteem the price;
And what his gain?—a tender smile and sigh
From a fond girl to feed his vanity.
Thus, every day they lived, and every time
They met, increased his anguish and his crime.

Still in their meetings they were oft-times nigh
The darling theme, and then pass'd trembling by;
On those occasions Henry often tried
For the sad truth—and then his heart denied
The utterance due: thus daily he became
The prey of weakness, vanity, and shame.

But soon a day, that was their doubts to close,
On the fond maid and thoughtless youth arose.
Within the park, beside the bounding brook,
The social pair their usual ramble took;
And there the steward found them: they could trace
News in his look, and gladness in his face.

He was a man of riches, bluff and big,
With clean brown broadcloth, and with white cut wig:
He bore a cane of price, with riband tied,
And a fat spaniel waddled at his side:
To every being whom he met he gave
His looks expressive; civil, gay, or grave,
But condescending all; and each declared
How much he govern'd, and how well he fared.

This great man bow'd, not humbly, but his bow
Appear'd familiar converse to allow:
The trembling Fanny, as he came in view,
Within the chestnut grove in fear withdrew;
While Henry wonder'd, not without a fear,
Of that which brought th' important man so near:
Doubt was dispers'd by—"My esteem'd young man!"
As he with condescending grace began—

" Though you with youthful frankness nobly trust
" Your Fanny's friends, and doubtless think them just,—
" Though you have not, with craving soul, applied
" To us, and ask'd the fortune of your bride,—
" Be it our care that you shall not lament
" That love has made you so improvident.

" An orphan maid——Your patience! you shall have
" Your time to speak, I now attention crave;—
" Fanny, dear girl! has in my spouse and me
" Friends of a kind we wish our friends to be,
" None of the poorest——nay, sir, no reply,
" You shall not need——and we are born to die;
" And one yet crawls on earth, of whom, I say
" That what he has he cannot take away,—
" Her mother's father, one who has a store
" Of this world's good, and always looks for more;
" But, next his money, loves the girl at heart,
" And she will have it when they come to part."

" Sir," said the Youth, his terrors all awake,
" Hear me, I pray, I beg,—for mercy's sake!
" Sir, were the secrets of my soul confess'd,
" Would you admit the truths that I protest
" Are such——your pardon——"
" Pardon! good, my friend,
" I not alone will pardon, I commend:
" Think you that I have no remembrance left
" Of youthful love, and Cupid's cunning theft?
" How nymphs will listen when their swains persuade,
" How hearts are gain'd, and how exchange is made?
" Come, sir, your hand——"
" In mercy, hear me now!"—
" I cannot hear you, time will not allow:
" You know my station, what on me depends,
" For ever needed—but we part as friends;
" And here comes one who will the whole explain,
" My better self—and we shall meet again."

" Sir, I entreat——"
" Then be entreaty made
" To her, a woman, one you may persuade;
" A little teasing, but she will comply,
" And loves her niece too fondly to deny."

" O! he is mad, and miserable I!"
Exclaim'd the Youth; " but let me now collect
" My scatter'd thoughts, I something must effect."

Hurrying she came—" Now, what has he confess'd,
" Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?
" What! he has grieved you! Yet he, too, approves
" The thing! but man will tease you, if he loves.
" But now for business: tell me, did you think
" That we should always at your meetings wink?
" Think you, you walk'd unseen? There are who bring
" To me all secrets—O, you wicked thing!
" Poor Fanny! now I think I see her blush,
" All red and rosy, when I beat the bush;
" And hide your secret, said I, if you dare!
" So out it came, like an affrighten'd hare.

" Miss! said I, gravely; and the trembling maid
" Pleased me at heart to see her so afraid;
" And then she wept;—now, do remember this,
" Never to chide her when she does amiss;
" For she is tender as the callow bird,
" And cannot bear to have her temper stirr'd;—
" Fanny, I said, then whisper'd her the name,
" And caused such looks—Yes, yours are just the same;
" But hear my story—When your love was known
" For this our child—she is, in fact, our own—
" Then, first debating, we agreed at last
" To seek my Lord, and tell him what had pass'd."

" To tell the Earl?"
" Yes, truly, and why not?
" And then together we contrived our plot."

" Eternal God!"
" Nay, be not so surprised,—
" In all the matter we were well advised;
" We saw my Lord, and Lady Jane was there,
" And said to Johnson, 'Johnson, take a chair;'
" True, we are servants in a certain way,
" But in the higher places so are they;
" We are obey'd in ours, and they in theirs obey:
" So Johnson bow'd, for that was right and fit,
" And had no scruple with the Earl to sit;—
" Why look you so impatient while I tell
" What they debated?—you must like it well.

" 'Let them go on,' our gracious Earl began;
" 'They will go off,' said, joking, my good man:
" 'Well!' said the Countess,—she 's a lover's friend,—
" 'What if they do? they make the speedier end.'——
" But be you more composed, for that dear child
" Is with her joy and apprehension wild:
" O! we have watch'd you on from day to day,—
" 'There go the lovers!' we were wont to say;—
" But why that look?"—
" Dear madam, I implore
" A single moment!"—
" I can give no more:
" Here are your letters—'That 's a female pen,'
" Said I to Fanny.—' 'T is his sister's, then,'
" Replied the maid.—No! never must you stray;
" Or hide your wanderings, if you should, I pray:
" I know, at least I fear, the best may err,
" But keep the by-walks of your life from her.
" That youth should stray is nothing to be told,
" When they have sanction in the grave and old,
" Who have no call to wander and transgress,
" But very love of change and wantonness.

" I prattle idly, while your letters wait,
" And then my Lord has much that he would state,
" All good to you—do clear that clouded face,
" And with good looks your lucky lot embrace.

" Now, mind that none with her divide your heart,
" For she would die ere lose the smallest part;
" And I rejoice that all has gone so well,
" For who th' effect of Johnson's rage can tell?

" He had his fears when you began to meet,
" But I assured him there was no deceit:
" He is a man who kindness will requite,
" But, injured once, revenge is his delight;
" And he would spend the best of his estates
" To ruin, goods and body, them he hates;
" While he is kind enough when he approves
" A deed that 's done, and serves the man he loves:
" Come, read your letters—I must now be gone,
" And think of matters that are coming on."

Henry was lost,—his brain confused, his soul
Dismay'd and sunk, his thoughts beyond control;
Borne on by terror, he foreboding read
Cecilia's letter! and his courage fled:[4]
All was a gloomy, dark, and dreadful view;
He felt him guilty, but indignant too;
And as he read, he felt the high disdain
Of injured men—" She may repent in vain."

Cecilia much had heard, and told him all
That scandal taught—" A servant at the Hall,
" Or servant's daughter, in the kitchen bred,
" Whose father would not with her mother wed,
" Was now his choice! a blushing fool, the toy,
" Or the attempted, both of man and boy;
" More than suspected, but without the wit
" Or the allurements for such creatures fit;
" Not virtuous though unfeeling, cold as ice
" And yet not chaste, the weeping fool of vice;
" Yielding, not tender; feeble, not refined;
" Her form insipid, and without a mind.

" Rival! she spurn'd the word; but let him stay,
" Warn'd as he was! beyond the present day,
" Whate'er his patron might object to this,
" The uncle-butler, or the weeping miss—
" Let him from this one single day remain,
" And then return! he would, to her, in vain;
" There let him then abide, to earn or crave
" Food undeserved! and be with slaves a slave."

Had reason guided anger, govern'd zeal,
Or chosen words to make a lover feel,
She might have saved him—anger and abuse
Will but defiance and revenge produce.

" Unjust and cruel, insolent and proud!"
He said, indignant, and he spoke aloud.
" Butler! and servant! Gentlest of thy sex,
" Thou wouldst not thus a man who loved thee vex;
" Thou wouldst not thus to vile report give ear,
" Nor thus enraged for fancied crimes appear:
" I know not what, dear maid!—if thy soft smiles were here."

And then, that instant, there appear'd the maid,
By his sad looks in her approach dismay'd;
Such timid sweetness, and so wrong'd, did more
Than all her pleading tenderness before.
In that weak moment, when disdain and pride,
And fear and fondness, drew the man aside,—

[4] [MS.:—Her quill was one not pluck'd from Venus' dove,
And her smart language proved her wounded love.]

In this weak moment, "Wilt thou," he began,
"Be mine?" and joy o'er all her features ran:
"I will!" she softly whisper'd; but the roar
Of cannon would not strike his spirit more;
E'en as his lips the lawless contract seal'd,
He felt that conscience lost her seven-fold shield,
And honour fled; but still he spoke of love,
And all was joy in the consenting dove.

That evening all in fond discourse was spent,
When the sad lover to his chamber went,
To think on what had pass'd, to grieve, and to repent:
Early he rose, and look'd with many a sigh
On the red light that fill'd the eastern sky:
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,
To hail the glories of the new-born day;
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,
He saw the wind upon the water blow,
And the cold stream curl'd onward as the gale
From the pine-hill blew harshly down the dale;
On the right side the youth a wood survey'd,
With all its dark intensity of shade;
Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,
In this, the pause of nature and of love,
When now the young are rear'd, and when the old,
Lost to the tie, grow negligent and cold:
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
Half hid in mist that hung upon the fen;
Before him swallows, gathering for the sea,
Took their short flights, and twitter'd on the lea;
And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
And slowly blacken'd in the sickly sun;
All these were sad in nature, or they took
Sadness from him, the likeness of his look,
And of his mind—he ponder'd for a while,
Then met his Fanny with a borrow'd smile.

Not much remain'd; for money and my Lord
Soon made the father of the youth accord;
His prudence half resisted, half obey'd,
And scorn kept still the guardians of the maid:
Cecilia never on the subject spoke,
She seem'd as one who from a dream awoke;
So all was peace, and soon the married pair
Fix'd with fair fortune in a mansion fair.

Five years had pass'd, and what was Henry then?
The most repining of repenting men;
With a fond, teasing, anxious wife, afraid
Of all attention to another paid;
Yet powerless she her husband to amuse,
Lives but t' entreat, implore, resent, accuse;
Jealous and tender, conscious of defects,
She merits little, and yet much expects;
She looks for love that now she cannot see,
And sighs for joy that never more can be;

On his retirements her complaints intrude,
And fond reproof endears his solitude:
While he her weakness (once her kindness) sees,
And his affections in her languor freeze;
Regret, uncheck'd by hope, devours his mind,
He feels unhappy, and he grows unkind.

"Fool! to be taken by a rosy cheek,
"And eyes that cease to sparkle or to speak;
"Fool! for this child my freedom to resign,
"When one the glory of her sex was mine;
"While from this burden to my soul I hide,
"To think what Fate has dealt, and what denied.

"What fiend possess'd me when I tamely gave
"My forced assent to be an idiot's slave?
"Her beauty vanish'd, what for me remains?
"Th' eternal clicking of the galling chains:
"Her person truly I may think my own,
"Seen without pleasure, without triumph shown:
"Doleful she sits, her children at her knees,
"And gives up all her feeble powers to please:
"Whom I, unmoved, or moved with scorn, behold,
"Melting as ice, as vapid and as cold."

Such was his fate, and he must yet endure
The self-contempt that no self-love can cure:
Some business call'd him to a wealthy town
When unprepared for more than Fortune's frown;
There at a house he gave his luckless name,
The master absent, and Cecilia came.
Unhappy man! he could not, dared not speak,
But look'd around, as if retreat to seek:
This she allow'd not; but, with brow severe,
Ask'd him his business, sternly bent to hear;
He had no courage, but he view'd that face
As if he sought for sympathy and grace;
As if some kind returning thought to trace:
In vain; not long he waited, but, with air
That of all grace compell'd him to despair,
She rang the bell, and, when a servant came,
Left the repentant traitor to his shame;
But, going, spoke, "Attend this person out,
"And, if he speaks, hear what he comes about!"
Then, with cool curtsy, from the room withdrew,
That seem'd to say, "Unhappy man, adieu!"

Thus will it be when man permits a vice
First to invade his heart, and then entice;[5]
When wishes vain and undefined arise,
And that weak heart deceive, seduce, surprise;
When evil Fortune works on Folly's side,
And rash Resentment adds a spur to Pride;—
Then life's long troubles from those actions come,
In which a moment may decide our doom.[6]

[5] [Originally:—
And thus for ever shall it be when vice
Shall the weak heart from rectitude entice,
Or fear with some poor passion shall unite
To make that timid turning from the right,—
Unerring Justice shall her pains decree,
And man shall own that thus it ought to be.]

[6] ["This is one of the best managed of all the tales. It contains a very full, true, and particular account of the way in which a weakish but well-meaning young man, engaged on his own suit to a very amiable girl, may be seduced, during her unlucky absence, to entangle himself with a far inferior person, whose chief seduction is her apparent humility and devotion to him."—JEFFREY.]

BOOK XIV.

THE NATURAL DEATH OF LOVE.

The Rector of the Parish—His manner of teaching—Of living—Richard's Correspondence—The Letters received—Love that survives Marriage—That dies in consequence—That is permitted to die for want of Care—Henry and Emma, a Dialogue—Complaints on either side—and Replies—Mutual Accusation—Defence of acknowledged Error—Means of restoring Happiness—The one to be adopted.

RICHARD one month had with his Brother been,
And had his guests, his friends, his favourites seen;
Had heard the Rector, who with decent force,
But not of action, aided his discourse:
"A moral teacher!" some contemptuous cried;
He smiled, but nothing of the fact denied,
Nor, save by his fair life, to charge so strong replied.
Still, though he bade them not on aught rely
That was their own, but all their worth deny,
They call'd his pure advice his cold morality;
And though he felt that earnestness and zeal,
That made some portion of his hearers feel,
Nay, though he loved the minds of men to lead
To the great points that form the Christian's creed,
Still he offended, for he would discuss
Points that to him seem'd requisite for us;
And urge his flock to virtue, though he knew
The very heathen taught the virtues too:

Nor was this moral minister afraid
To ask of inspiration's self the aid
Of truths by him so sturdily maintain'd,
That some confusion in the parish reign'd:
"Heathens," they said, "can tell us right from wrong,
"But to a Christian higher points belong."
Yet Jacques proceeded, void of fear and shame,
In his old method, and obtain'd the name
Of *Moral Preacher*—yet they all agreed,
Whatever error had defiled his creed,
His life was pure, and him they could commend,
Not as their guide, indeed, but as their friend:
Truth, justice, pity, and a love of peace,
Were his—but there must approbation cease;
He either did not, or he would not see,
That, if he meant a favourite priest to be,
He must not show, but learn of them, the way
To truth—he must not dictate, but obey:
They wish'd him not to bring them further light,
But to convince them that they now were right,
And to assert that justice will condemn
All who presumed to disagree with them:
In this he fail'd, and his the greater blame,
For he persisted, void of fear or shame.[1]

Him Richard heard, and by his friendly aid
Were pleasant views observed and visits paid;

[1] ["Notwithstanding Mr. Crabbe's flattering reception among the principal people of Trowbridge, he was far from being much liked, for some years, by his new parishioners in general: nor, in truth, is it at all difficult to account for this. His immediate predecessor, the curate of the previous rector, had been endeared to the more serious inhabitants by warm zeal and a powerful talent for preaching extempore, and had, moreover, been so universally respected, that the town petitioned the Duke of Rutland to give him the living. His Grace's refusal had irritated many even of those who took little interest in the qualifications of their pastor, and engendered a feeling bordering on ill-will towards Mr. Crabbe himself, which was heightened by the prevalence of some reports so ridiculous that I am almost ashamed to notice them; such as, that he was a dissipated man—a dandy—even a gambler. And then, when he appeared among them, the perfect openness of his nature,—that, perhaps, impolitic frankness which made him at all times scorn the assumption of a scruple which he did not really feel, led him to violate, occasionally, what were considered, among many classes in that neighbourhood, the settled laws of clerical decorum. He might be seen occasionally at a concert, a ball, or even a play. Then, even in the exercise of his unwearied and extensive charity, he often so conducted himself as to neutralise, in coarse and bad minds, all the natural movements of gratitude; mixing the clergyman too much with the almsgiver, and reading a lecture, the severity of which, however just, was more thought of than the benefaction it accompanied. He, moreover, soon after his arrival, espoused the cause of a candidate for the county representation, to whom the manufacturing interest, the prevalent one in his parish, was extremely hostile. Lastly, to conclude this long list, Mr. Crabbe, in a town remarkable for diversity of sects and warmth of discussion, adhered for a season unchanged to the same view of scriptural doctrines which had latterly found little favour even at simple Muston. As he has told us of his own Rector, in the Tales of the Hall—

"'*A moral teacher!*' some contemptuous cried;
"He smiled, but nothing of the fact denied;
"Nor, save by his fair life, to charge so strong replied.

"Still, though he bade them not on aught rely
"That was their own, but all their worth deny,
"They call'd his pure advice his cold morality.
"'Heathens,' they said, 'can tell us right from wrong,
"'But to a Christian higher points belong.'"

But, while these things were against him, there were two or three traits in his character which wrought slowly, but steadily, in his favour. One was his boldness and uncompromising perseverance in the midst of opposition and reproach. During the violence of that contested election, while the few friends of Mr. Benett were almost in danger of their lives, he was twice assailed by a mob of his parishioners with hisses and the most virulent abuse: He replied to their formidable menaces by "rating them roundly;" and though he was induced to retire by the advice of some friends who hastened to his succour, yet this made no change in his vote, habits, or conduct. He manifested the same decision respecting his religious opinions; for one or two reproachful letters made no impression, nor altered his language in the least. Such firmness, where it is the effect of principle, is sure to gain respect from all Englishmen. But mildness was as natural to him as his fortitude; and this, of course, had a tendency to appease enmity even at its height. A benevolent gentle heart was seen in his manner and countenance, and no occasional hastiness of temper could conceal it;—and then it soon became known that no one left his house unrelieved. But, above all, the liberality of his conduct with respect to dissenters brought a counter current in his favour. Though he was warmly attached to the established church, he held that

"A man's opinion was his own, his due,
"And just possession, whether false or true;"

and in all his intercourse with his much-divided parishioners he acted upon this principle, visiting and dealing indiscriminately, and joining the ministers of the various denominations in every good work. In the course of a few years, therefore, not only all opposition died away, but he became generally and cordially esteemed. They who differed from him admitted that he had a right also to his own religious and political opinions. His integrity and benevolence were justly appreciated; his talents acknowledged, and his disposition loved."—*Life, antè*, pp. 61, 62.]

He to peculiar people found his way,
And had his question answer'd, "Who are they?"

Twice in the week came letters, and delight
Beam'd in the eye of Richard at the sight;
Letters of love, all full and running o'er,
The paper fill'd till it could hold no more;
Cross'd with discolour'd ink, the doublings full,
No fear that love should find abundance dull;
Love reads unsated all that love inspires,
When most indulged, indulgence still requires;
Looks what the corners, what the crossings tell,
And lifts each folding for a fond farewell.

George saw and smiled—"To lovers we allow
"All this o'erflowing, but a husband thou!
"A father too; can time create no change?
"Married, and still so foolish?—very strange!
"What of this wife or mistress is the art?"—
"The simple truth, my Brother, to impart,
"Her heart, whene'er she writes, feels writing to a heart."—
"Fortune, dear Richard, is thy friend—a wife
"Like thine must soften every care of life,
"And all its woes—I know a pair whose lives
"Run in the common track of men and wives;
"And half their worth, at least, this pair would give
"Could they like thee and thy Matilda live.

"They were, as lovers, of the fondest kind,
"With no defects in manner or in mind;
"In habit, temper, prudence, they were those
"Whom, as examples, I could once propose;
"Now this, when married, you no longer trace,
"But discontent and sorrow in the place:
"Their pictures, taken as the pair I saw
"In a late contest, I have tried to draw;
"'T is but a sketch, and at my idle time
"I put my couple in the grab of rhyme:
"Thou art a critic of the milder sort,
"And thou wilt judge with favour my report.

"Let me premise, twelve months have flown away,
"Swiftly or sadly, since the happy day.

"Let us suppose the couple left to spend
"Some hours without engagement or a friend;
"And be it likewise on our mind impress'd,
"They pass for persons happy, and at rest;
"Their love by Hymen crown'd, and all their prospects bless'd.

"Love has slow death and sudden: wretches prove
"That fate severe—the sudden death of love;
"It is as if, on day serenely bright,
"Came with its horrors instantaneous night;
"Others there are with whom love dies away
"In gradual waste and unperceived decay;
"Such is that death of love that nature finds
"Most fitted for the use of common minds,
"The natural death; but doubtless there are some
"Who struggle hard when they perceive it come;
"Loth to be loved no longer, loth to prove
"To the once dear that they no longer love:
"And some with not successless arts will strive
"To keep the weak'ning, fluttering flame alive.
"But see my verse; in this I try to paint
"The passion failing, fading to complaint,
"The gathering grief for joys remember'd yet,
"The vain remonstrance, and the weak regret:
"First speaks the wife in sorrow, she is grieved
"T' admit the truth, and would be still deceived."

HENRY AND EMMA.

E. Well, my good sir, I shall contend no more;
But, O! the vows you made, the oaths you swore!

H. To love you always:—I confess it true;
And do I not? If not, what can I do?
Moreover, think what you yourself profess'd,
And then the subject may for ever rest.

E. Yes, sir, obedience I profess'd; I know
My debt, and wish to pay you all I owe,
Pay without murmur; but that vow was made
To you who said it never should be paid;—
Now truly tell me why you took such care
To make me err? I ask'd you not to swear,
But rather hoped you would my mind direct,
And say, when married, what you would expect.

You may remember—it is not so long
Since you affirm'd that I could not be wrong;
I told you then—you recollect, I told
The very truth—that humour would not hold;
Not that I thought, or ever could suppose,
The mighty raptures were so soon to close—
Poetic flights of love all sunk in sullen prose.

Do you remember how you used to hang
Upon my looks? your transports when I sang?
I play'd—you melted into tears; I moved—
Voice, words, and motion, how you all approved;
A time when Emma reign'd, a time when Henry loved:
You recollect?

H. Yes, surely; and then why
The needless truths? do I the facts deny?
For this remonstrance I can see no need,
Or this impatience—if you do, proceed.

E. O! that is now so cool, and with a smile
That sharpens insult—I detest the style;
And, now I talk of styles, with what delight
You read my lines—I then, it seems, could write;
In short, when I was present, you could see
But one dear object, and you lived for me;
And now, sir, what your pleasure? Let me dress,
Sing, speak, or write, and you your sense express
Of my poor taste—my words are not correct;
In all I do is failing or defect—
Some error you will seek, some blunder will detect;
And what can such dissatisfaction prove?
I tell you, Henry, you have ceased to love.

H. I own it not; but if a truth it be,
It is the fault of nature, not of me.
Remember you, my love, the fairy tale,
Where the young pairs were spell-bound in the vale?
When all around them gay or glorious seem'd,
And of bright views and ceaseless joys they dream'd?
Young love and infant life no more could give—
They said but half, when they exclaim'd, "We live!"
All was so light, so lovely, so serene,
And not a trouble to be heard or seen;
Till, melting into truth, the vision fled,
And there came miry roads and thorny ways instead.

Such was our fate, my charmer! we were found
A wandering pair, by roguish Cupid bound;
All that I saw was gifted to inspire
Grand views of bliss, and wake intense desire
Of joys that never pall, of flights that never tire;
There was that purple light of love, that bloom,
That ardent passions in their growth assume,
That pure enjoyment of the soul—O! weak
Are words such loves and glowing thoughts to speak!
I sought to praise thee, and I felt disdain
Of my own effort; all attempts were vain.

Nor they alone were charming; by that light
All loved of thee grew lovely in my sight;
Sweet influence not its own in every place
Was found, and there was found in all things grace;
Thy shrubs and plants were seen new bloom to bear,
Not the Arabian sweets so fragrant were,
Nor Eden's self, if aught with Eden might compare.

You went the church-way walk, you reach'd the farm,
And gave the grass and babbling springs a charm;
Crop, whom you rode,—sad rider though you be,—
Thenceforth was more than Pegasus to me.
Have I not woo'd your snarling cur to bend
To me the paw and greeting of a friend?
And all his surly ugliness forgave,
Because, like me, he was my Emma's slave?
Think you, thus charm'd, I would the spell revoke?
Alas! my love, we married, and it broke!

Yet no deceit or falsehood stain'd my breast,
What I asserted might a saint attest;
Fair, dear, and good thou wert—nay, fairest, dearest, best:
Nor shame, nor guilt, nor falsehood I avow,
But 'tis by heaven's own light I see thee now;
And if that light will all those glories chase,
'Tis not my wish that will the good replace.

E. O! sir, this boyish tale is mighty well,
But 'twas your falsehood that destroy'd the spell:
Speak not of nature, 'tis an evil mind
That makes you to accustom'd beauties blind;
You seek the faults yourself, and then complain you find.

H. I sought them not: but, madam, 'tis in vain
The course of love and nature to restrain.
Lo! when the buds expand, the leaves are green,
Then the first opening of the flower is seen;
Then comes the honey'd breath and rosy smile,
That with their sweets the willing sense beguile;
But, as we look, and love, and taste, and praise,
And the fruit grows, the charming flower decays;
Till all is gather'd, and the wintry blast
Moans o'er the place of love and pleasure past.

So 'tis with beauty—such the opening grace
And dawn of glory in the youthful face;
Then are the charms unfolded to the sight,
Then all is loveliness and all delight;
The nuptial tie succeeds the genial hour,
And, lo! the falling off of beauty's flower;
So through all nature is the progress made,—
The bud, the bloom, the fruit,—and then we fade.

Then sigh no more,—we might as well retain
The year's gay prime as bid that love remain—
That fond, delusive, happy, transient spell,
That hides us from a world wherein we dwell,
And forms and fits us for that fairy ground
Where charming dreams and gay conceits abound;
Till comes at length th' awakening strife and care,
That we, as tried and toiling men, must share.

E. O! sir, I must not think that Heaven approves
Ungrateful man or unrequited loves;
Nor that we less are fitted for our parts
By having tender souls and feeling hearts.

H. Come, my dear friend, and let us not refuse
The good we have, by grief for that we lose;
But let us both the very truth confess;
This must relieve the ill, and may redress.

E. O! much I fear! I practised no deceit;
Such as I am I saw you at my feet:
If for a goddess you a girl would take,
'T is you yourself the disappointment make.

H. And I alone!—O! Emma, when I pray'd
For grace from thee, transported and afraid,
Now raised to rapture, now to terror doom'd,
Was not the goddess by the girl assumed?
Did not my Emma use her skill to hide—
Let us be frank—her weakness and her pride?
Did she not all her sex's arts pursue,
To bring the angel forward to my view?
Was not the rising anger oft suppress'd?
Was not the waking passion hush'd to rest?
And when so mildly sweet you look'd and spoke,
Did not the woman deign to wear a cloak?
A cloak she wore, or, though not clear my sight,
I might have seen her—think you not I might?

E. O! this is glorious!—while your passion lives,
To the loved maid a robe of grace it gives;
And then, unjust! beholds her with surprise,
Unrobed, ungracious, when the passion dies.

H. For this, my Emma, I to Heaven appeal,
I felt entirely what I seem'd to feel;

Thou wert all precious in my sight, to me
The being angels are supposed to be;
And am I now of my deception told,
Because I 'm doom'd a woman to behold?

E. Sir! in few words, I would a question ask—
Mean these reproaches that I wore a mask?
Mean you that I by art or caution tried
To show a virtue, or a fault to hide?

H. I will obey you.—When you seem'd to feel
Those books we read, and praised them with such zeal,
Approving all that certain friends approved,
Was it the pages or the praise you loved?
Nay, do not frown—I much rejoiced to find
Such early judgment in such gentle mind;
But, since we married, have you deigned to look
On the grave subjects of one favourite book?
Or have the once applauded pages power
T' engage their warm approver for an hour?

Nay, hear me further.—When we view'd that dell
Where lie those ruins—you must know it well—
When that worn pediment your walk delay'd,
And the stream gushing through the arch decay'd—
When at the venerable pile you stood,
Till the does ventured on our solitude,
We were so still! before the growing day
Call'd us reluctant from our seat away—
Tell me, was all the feeling you express'd
The genuine feeling of my Emma's breast;
Or was it borrow'd, that her faithful slave
The higher notion of her taste might have?
So may I judge, for of that lovely scene
The married Emma has no witness been;
No more beheld that water, falling, flow
Through the green fern that there delights to grow.

Once more, permit me. Well, I know, you feel
For suffering men, and would their sufferings heal,
But when at certain huts you chose to call,
At certain seasons, was compassion all?
I there beheld thee, to the wretched dear
As angels to expiring saints appear
When whispering hope—I saw an infant press'd
And hush'd to slumber on my Emma's breast!
Hush'd be each rude suggestion!—Well I know
With a free hand your bounty you bestow;
And to these objects frequent comforts send,
But still they see not now their pitying friend.
A merchant, Emma, when his wealth he states,
Though rich, is faulty if he over-rates
His real store; and gaining greater trust
For the deception, should we deem him just?

If in your singleness of heart you hide
No flaw or frailty, when your truth is tried,
And time has drawn aside the veil of love,
We may be sorry, but we must approve;
The fancied charms no more our praise compel,
But doubly shines the worth that stands so well.

E. O! precious are you all, and prizes too,
Or could we take such guilty pains for you?
Believe it not—As long as passion lasts,
A charm about the chosen maid it casts;
And the poor girl has little more to do
Than just to keep in sight as you pursue:
Chance to a ruin leads her; you behold,
And straight the angel of her taste is told:
Chance to a cottage leads you, and you trace
A virtuous pity in the angel's face;
She reads a work you chance to recommend,
And likes it well—at least she likes the friend;
But when it chances this no more is done,
She has not left one virtue—no! not one!

But be it said, good sir, we use such art,
Is it not done to hold a fickle heart,
And fix a roving eye? Is that design
Shameful or wicked that would keep you mine?
If I confess the art, I would proceed
To say of such that every maid has need.

Then when you flatter—in your language, praise—
In our own view you must our value raise;
And must we not, to this mistaken man,
Appear as like his picture as we can?
If you will call—nay, treat us as divine,
Must we not something to your thoughts incline?
If men of sense will worship whom they love,
Think you the idol will the error prove?
What! show him all her glory is pretence,
And make an idiot of this man of sense?

Then, too, suppose we should his praise refuse,
And clear his mind, we may our lover lose;
In fact, you make us more than nature makes,
And we, no doubt, consent to your mistakes;
You will, we know, until the frenzy cools,
Enjoy the transient paradise of fools;
But, fancy fled, you quit the blissful state,
And truth for ever bars the golden gate.

H. True! but how ill each other to upbraid,
'T is not our fault that we no longer stay'd;
No sudden fate our lingering love suppress'd,
It died an easy death, and calmly sank to rest;
To either sex is the delusion lent,
And when it fails us, we should rest content;
'T is cruel to reproach, when bootless to repent.

E. Then wise the lovers who consent to wait,
And, always lingering, never try the state;
But, hurried on by what they call their pain,
And I their bliss, no longer they refrain;
To ease that pain, to lose that bliss, they run
To the church magi, and the thing is done:
A spell is utter'd, and a ring applied,
And forth they walk a bridegroom and a bride,
To find this counter-charm, this marriage rite,
Has put their present fallacies to flight![2]

[2] [Here follows in MS.:—
Well, then, it seems from fairy land we come
To this of truth! and this must be our home.
What can we do? the air is bleak and cold,
And all is dark and dull that we behold.

In that dear land, what views about us rose!
Views dull and tedious our sad scenes disclose;
How cold and languid these! how warm and sprightly those!

But tell me, Henry, should we truly strive,
May we not bid the happy dream revive?

H. Alas! they say when weakness or when vice
Expels a foolish pair from Paradise,
The guardian power to prayer has no regard,—
The knowledge once obtain'd, the gate is barr'd;
Or could we enter, we should still repine,
Unless we could the knowledge too resign.
Yet let us calmly view our present fate,
And make a humbler Eden of our state;
With this advantage, that what now we gain,
Experience gives and prudence will retain.

E. Ah! much I doubt—when you in fury broke
That lovely vase by one impassion'd stroke,
And thousand china fragments met my sight,
Till rising anger put my grief to flight;
As well might you the beauteous jar repiece,
As joy renew and bid vexation cease.

H. Why, then 't is wisdom, Emma, not to keep
These griefs in memory; they had better sleep.

There was a time when this heaven-guarded isle,
Whose valleys flourish—nay, whose mountains smile—
Was sterile, wild, deform'd, and beings rude
Creatures scarce wilder than themselves pursued;
The sea was heard around a waste to howl,
The night-wolf answer'd to the whooting owl,
And all was wretched:—Yet who now surveys
The land withholds his wonder and his praise?
Come, let us try and make our moral view
Improve like this—this have we power to do.

E. O! I 'll be all forgetful, deaf and dumb,
And all you wish, to have these changes come.

H. And come they may, if not as heretofore,
We cannot all the lovely vase restore;
What we beheld in Love's perspective glass
Has pass'd away—one sigh! and let it pass:
It was a blissful vision, and it fled,
And we must get some actual good instead:
Of good and evil that we daily find,—
That we must hoard, *this* banish from the mind;
The food of Love, that food on which he thrives,
To find must be the business of our lives;
And when we know what Love delights to see,
We must his guardians and providers be.

As careful peasants, with incessant toil,
Bring earth to vines in bare and rocky soil,
And, as they raise with care each scanty heap,
Think of the purple clusters they shall reap;
So those accretions to the mind we 'll bring,
Whence fond regard and just esteem will spring;
Then, though we backward look with some regret
On those first joys, we shall be happy yet.

There were Love's friends,—hope, joy, and generous trust;
Here are his foes—care, caution, and disgust.
There was the warm, confiding soul of youth;
Here doubt and care, and cold assent to truth.
Oh! 't is beyond repair, beyond dispute,
That flower of promise has this bitter fruit!
Oh, 't is a dismal fruit! I prithee strive
For the old prospect—bid the dream revive.]

Each on the other must in all depend,
The kind adviser, the unfailing friend;
Through the rough world we must each other aid,
Leading and led, obeying and obey'd;
Favour'd and favouring, eager to believe
What should be truth—unwilling to perceive
What might offend—determined to remove
What has offended; wisely to improve
What pleases yet, and guard returning love.

Nor doubt, my Emma, but in many an hour
Fancy, who sleeps, shall wake with all her power;
And we shall pass—though not perhaps remain—
To fairy-land, and feel its charm again.[3]

BOOK XV.

GRETNA GREEN.

Richard meets an Acquaintance of his Youth—The kind of Meeting—His School—The Doctor Sidmere and his Family—Belwood, a Pupil—The Doctor's Opinion of him—The Opinion of his Wife—and of his Daughter—Consultation—The Lovers—Flight to Gretna Green—Return no more—The Doctor and his Lady—Belwood and his Wife—The Doctor reflects—Goes to his Son-in-law—His Reception and Return.

"I MET," said Richard, when return'd to dine,
"In my excursion, with a friend of mine;
"Friend! I mistake,—but yet I knew him well,
"Ours was the village where he came to dwell:
"He was an orphan born to wealth, and then
"Placed in the guardian-care of cautious men;
"When our good parent, who was kindness all,
"Fed and caress'd him when he chose to call;
"And this he loved, for he was always one
"For whom some pleasant service must be done,
"Or he was sullen. He would come and play
"At his own time, and at his pleasure stay;
"But our kind parent soothed him as a boy
"Without a friend; she loved he should enjoy
"A day of ease, and strove to give his mind employ:
"She had but seldom the desired success,
"And therefore parting troubled her the less.
"Two years he there remain'd, then went his way,
"I think to school: and him I met to-day.

"I heard his name, or he had pass'd unknown,
"And, without scruple, I divulged my own;
"His words were civil, but not much express'd,—
"'Yes! he had heard I was my Brother's guest;'

[3] ["This tale is perhaps the best written of all the pieces before us. It consists of a very spirited dialogue between a married pair, upon the causes of the difference between the days of marriage and those of courtship; in which the errors and faults of both parties, and the petulance, impatience, and provoking acuteness of the lady, with the more reasonable and reflecting, but somewhat insulting, manner of the gentleman, are all exhibited to the life."—JEFFREY.]

" Then would explain what was not plain to me,
" Why he could not a social neighbour be:
" He envied you, he said, your quiet life,
" And me a loving and contented wife;
" You, as unfetter'd by domestic bond,
" Me, as a husband and a father fond:
" I was about to speak, when to the right
" The road then turn'd, and, lo! his house in sight.

" 'Adieu!' he said, nor gave a word or sign
" Of invitation—'Yonder house is mine;
" 'Your Brother's I prefer, if I might choose—
" 'But, my dear sir, you have no time to lose.'

" Say, is he poor? or has he fits of spleen?
" Or is he melancholy, moped, or mean?
" So cold, so distant——I bestow'd some pains
" Upon the fever in my Irish veins."

" Well, Richard, let your native wrath be tamed;
" The man has half the evils you have named;
" He is not poor, indeed, nor is he free
" From all the gloom and care of poverty."

" But is he married?"—" Hush! the bell, my friend;
" That business done, we will to this attend;
" And, o'er our wine engaged, and at our ease,
" We may discourse of Belwood's miseries;
" Not that his sufferings please me: no, indeed;
" But I from such am happy to be freed."

Their speech, of course, to this misfortune led,
A weak young man improvidently wed.
" Weak," answer'd Richard; " but we do him wrong
" To say that his affection was not strong."

" That we may doubt," said George; " in men so weak
" You may in vain the strong affections seek;
" They have strong appetites; a fool will eat
" As long as food is to his palate sweet;
" His rule is not what sober nature needs,
" But what the palate covets as he feeds;
" He has the passions, anger, envy, fear,
" As storm is angry, and as frost severe;
" Uncheck'd, he still retains what nature gave,
" And has what creatures of the forest have.

" Weak boys, indulged by parents just as weak,
" Will with much force of their affection speak;
" But let mamma th' accustom'd sweets withhold,
" And the fond boys grow insolent and cold.

" Weak men profess to love, and while untried
" May woo with warmth, and grieve to be denied;
" But this is selfish ardour,—all the zeal
" Of their pursuit is from the wish they feel
" For self-indulgence.—When do they deny
" Themselves? and when the favourite object fly?
" Or, for that object's sake, with her requests comply?
" Their sickly love is fed with hopes of joy,
" Repulses damp it, and delays destroy;
" Love, that to virtuous acts will some excite,
" In others but provokes an appetite;
" In better minds, when love possession takes
" And meets with peril, he the reason shakes;
" But these weak natures, when they love profess,
" Never regard their small concerns the less.

" That true and genuine love has Quixote-flights
" May be allow'd—in vision it delights;
" But, in its loftiest flight, its wildest dream,
" Has something in it that commands esteem;
" But this poor love to no such region soars,
" But, Sancho-like, its selfish loss deplores;
" Of its own merit and its service speaks,
" And full reward for all its duty seeks."

" When a rich boy, with all the pride of youth,
" Weds a poor beauty, will you doubt his truth?
" Such love is tried—it indiscreet may be,
" But must be generous."—
" That I do not see:
" Just at this time the balance of the mind
" Is this or that way by the weights inclined;
" In this scale beauty, wealth in that abides,
" In dubious balance, till the last subsides;
" Things are not poised in just the equal state,
" That the ass stands stock-still in the debate;
" Though when deciding he may slowly pass
" And long for both—the nature of the ass—
" 'T is but an impulse that he must obey
" When he resigns one bundle of the hay."

Take your friend Belwood, whom his guardians sent
To Doctor Sidmere—full of dread he went;
Doctor they call'd him—he was not of us,
And where he was, we need not now discuss:
He kept a school, he had a daughter fair,
He said, as angels,—say, as women are.

Clara, this beauty, had a figure light,
Her face was handsome, and her eyes were bright;
Her voice was music, not by anger raised,
And sweet her dimple, either pleased or praised;
All round the village was her fame allow'd,
She was its pride, and not a little proud.

The ruling thought that sway'd her father's mind
Was this—I am for dignity design'd:
Riches he rather as a mean approved,
Yet sought them early, and in seeking loved;
For this he early made the marriage vow,
But fail'd to gain—I recollect not how;
For this his lady had his wrath incurr'd,
But that her feelings seldom could be stirr'd;
To his fair daughter, famed as well as fair,
He look'd, and found his consolation there.

The Doctor taught of youth some half a score,
Well-born and wealthy—he would take no more;
His wife, when peevish, told him, " Yes! and glad"—
It might be so—no more were to be had.
Belwood, it seems, for college was design'd,
But for more study he was not inclined:

He thought of labouring there with much dismay,
And motives mix'd here urged the long delay.
He now on manhood verged, at least began
To talk as he supposed became a man.

Whether he chose the college or the school
" Was his own act, and that should no man rule;
" He had his reasons for the step he took:
" Did they suppose he stay'd to read his book?"

Hopeless, the Doctor said, " This boy is one
" With whom I fear there 's nothing to be done."
His wife replied, who more had guess'd or knew,
" You only mean there 's nothing he can do;
" E'en there you err, unless you mean indeed
" That the poor lad can neither think nor read."

" What credit can I by such dunce obtain?"—
" Credit? I know not—you may something gain;
" 'T is true he has no passion for his books,
" But none can closer study Clara's looks;
" And who controls him? Now his father 's gone,
" There 's not a creature cares about the son.
" If it be brought to ask your daughter's hand,
" All that he has will be at your command;
" And who is she? and whom does she obey?
" Where is the wrong, and what the danger, pray?
" Becoming guide to one who guidance needs
" Is merit surely.—If the things succeeds,
" Cannot you always keep him at your side,
" And be his honour'd guardian and his guide?
" And cannot I my pretty Clara rule?
" Is not this better than a noisy school?"

The Doctor thought and mused, he felt and fear'd,
Wish'd it to be—then wish'd he had not heard;
But he was angry—that at least was right,
And gave him credit in his lady's sight;—
Then, milder grown, *yet something* still severe,
He said, " Consider, madam, think and fear;"
But, ere they parted, softening to a smile,
" Farewell!" said he—" I 'll think myself a while."

James and his Clara had, with many a pause
And many a doubt, infringed the Doctor's laws;
At first with terror, and with eyes turn'd round
On every side for fear they should be found:
In the long passage, and without the gate,
They met, and talk'd of love and his estate;
Sweet little notes, and full of hope, were laid
Where they were found by the attentive maid;
And these she answer'd kindly as she could,
But still " I dare not" waited on " I would;"
Her fears and wishes she in part confess'd,
Her thoughts and views she carefully suppress'd;
Her Jemmy said at length, " he did not heed
" His guardian's anger—What was he, indeed?
" A tradesman once, and had his fortune gain'd
" In that low way,—such anger he disdain'd.
" He loved her pretty looks, her eyes of blue,
" Her auburn-braid, and lips that shone like dew;
" And did she think her Jemmy stay'd at school
" To study Greek?—What! take him for a fool?
" Not he, by Jove! for what he had to seek
" He would in English ask her, not in Greek;
" Will you be mine? are all your scruples gone?
" Then let 's be off—I 've that will take us on."

'T was true; the clerk of an attorney there
Had found a Jew,—the Jew supplied the heir.

Yet had he fears—" My guardians may condemn
" The choice I make; but what is that to them?
" The more they strive my pleasure to restrain,
" The less they 'll find they 're likely to obtain;
" For when they work one to a proper cue,
" What they forbid one takes delight to do."

Clara exulted: now the day would come
Belwood must take her in her carriage home:
" Then I shall hear what Envy will remark
" When I shall sport the ponies in the Park;
" When my friend Jane will meet me at the ball,
" And see me taken out the first of all;
" I see her looks when she beholds the men
" All crowd about me—she will simper then,
" And cry with her affected air and voice,
" ' O! my sweet Clara, how do I rejoice
" ' At your good fortune!'—' Thank you, dear,' say I;
" ' But some there are that could for envy die.' "

Mamma look'd on with thoughts to these allied;
She felt the pleasure of reflected pride;
She should respect in Clara's honour find,
But she to Clara's secret thoughts was blind.
O! when we thus design, we do but spread
Nets for our feet, and to our toils are led:
Those whom we think we rule, their views attain,
And we partake the guilt without the gain.

The Doctor long had thought, till he became
A victim both to avarice and shame;
From his importance, every eye was placed
On his designs: How dreadful if disgraced!
" O! that unknown to him the pair had flown
" To that same Green, the project all their own!
" And should they now be guilty of the act,
" Am not I free from knowledge of the fact?
" Will they not, if they will?" 'T is thus we meet
The check of conscience, and our guide defeat.

This friend, this spy, this counsellor at rest,
More pleasing views were to the mind address'd.
The mischief done, he would be much displeased,
For weeks, nay, months, and slowly be appeased;
Yet of this anger if they felt the dread,
Perhaps they dare not steal away to wed;
And if on hints of mercy they should go,
He stood committed—it must not be so.

In this dilemma either horn was hard,—
Best to seem careless, then, and off one's guard;
And, lest their terror should their flight prevent,
His wife might argue—fathers will relent
On such occasions; and that she should share
The guilt and censure was her proper care.

" Suppose them wed," said he, " and at my feet,
" I must exclaim that instant, Vile deceit!
" Then will my daughter, weeping, while they kneel,
" For its own Clara beg my heart may feel:
" At last, but slowly, I may all forgive,
" And their adviser and director live."

When wishes only weak the heart surprise,
Heaven, in its mercy, the fond prayer denies;
But when our wishes are both base and weak,
Heaven, in its justice, gives us what we seek.
All pass'd that was expected, all prepared
To share the comfort. What the comfort shared?

The married pair, on their return, agreed
That they from school were now completely freed—
Were man and wife, and to their mansion now
Should boldly drive, and their intents avow:
The acting guardian in the mansion reign'd,
And, thither driving, they their will explain'd:
The man a while discoursed in language high,
The ward was sullen, and made brief reply;
Till, when he saw th' opposing strength decline,
He bravely utter'd—"Sir, the house is mine!"
And, like a lion, lash'd by self-rebuke,
His own defence he bravely undertook.

"Well! be it right or wrong, the thing is past;
"You cannot hinder what is tight and fast:
"The church has tied us; we are hither come
"To our own place, and you must make us room."

The man reflected—"You deserve, I know,
"Foolish young man! what fortune will bestow:
"No punishment from me your actions need,
"Whose pains will shortly to your faults succeed."

James was quite angry, wondering what was meant
By such expressions—Why should he repent?

New trial came.—The wife conceived it right
To see her parents;—"So," he said, "she might,
"If she had any fancy for a jail,
"But upon him no creature should prevail;
"No! he would never be again the fool
"To go and starve or study at a school!"

"O! but to see her parents!"—"Well! the sight
"Might give her pleasure—very like it might,
"And she might go; but to his house restored,
"He would not now be catechised and bored."
It was her duty;—"Well!" said he again,
"There you may go—and there you may remain!"

Already this?—Even so: he heard it said
How rash and heedless was the part he play'd;
For love of money in his spirit dwelt,
And there repentance was intensely felt:
His guardian told him he had bought a toy
At tenfold price, and bargain'd like a boy:
Angry at truth, and wrought to fierce disdain,
He swore his loss should be no woman's gain:
His table she might share, his name she must,
But if aught more—she gets it upon trust.

For a few weeks his pride her face display'd—
He then began to thwart her and upbraid;
He grew imperious, insolent, and loud—
His blinded weakness made his folly proud;
He would be master,—she had no pretence
To counsel him, as if he wanted sense;
He must inform her, she already cost
More than her worth, and more should not be lost;
But still concluding, "If your will be so,
"That you must see the old ones; do it—go!"

Some weeks the Doctor waited, and the while
His lady preach'd in no consoling style:
At last she fear'd that rustic had convey'd
Their child to prison—yes, she was afraid,—
There to remain in that old hall alone
With the vile heads of stags, and floors of stone.

"Why did you, sir, who know such things so well,
"And teach us good, permit them to rebel?
"Had you o'erawed and check'd them when in sight,
"They would not then have ventured upon flight;
"Had you——"—"Out, serpent! did not you begin?
"What! introduce, and then upbraid the sin?
"For sin it is, as I too well perceive:
"But leave me, woman, to reflection leave;
"Then to your closet fly, and on your knees
"Beg for forgiveness for such sins as these."

"A moody morning!" with a careless air
Replied the wife.—"Why counsel me to prayer?
"I think the lord and teacher of a school
"Should pray himself, and keep his temper cool."

Calm grew the husband when the wife was gone;
"The game," said he, "is never lost till won:
"'T is true, the rebels fly their proper home,
"They come not nigh, because they fear to come:
"And for my purpose fear will doubtless prove
"Of more importance and effect than love;—
"Suppose me there—suppose the carriage stops,
"Down on her knees my trembling daughter drops;
"Slowly I raise her, in my arms to fall,
"And call for mercy as she used to call;
"And shall that boy, who dreaded to appear
"Before me, cast away at once his fear?
"'T is not in nature!—He who once would cower
"Beneath my frown, and sob for half an hour;
"He who would kneel with motion prompt and quick
"If I but look'd, as dogs that do a trick;
"He still his knee-joints flexible must feel,
"And have a slavish promptitude to kneel;—
"Soon as he sees me he will drop his lip,
"And bend like one made ready for the whip.
"O! come, I trifle, let me haste away—
"What! throw it up, when I have cards to play?"

The Doctor went, a self-invited guest;
He met his pupil, and his frown repress'd,
For in those lowering looks he could discern
Resistance sullen and defiance stern;
Yet was it painful to put off his style
Of awful distance, and assume a smile:
So between these, the gracious and the grand,
Succeeded nothing that the Doctor plann'd.

The sullen youth, with some reviving dread,
Bow'd, and then hang'd disconsolate his head;

And, muttering welcome in a muffled tone,
Stalk'd cross the park to meditate alone,
Saying, or rather seeming to have said,
"Go! seek your daughter, and be there obey'd."

He went.—The daughter her distresses told,
But found her father to her interests cold;
He kindness and complacency advised;
She answer'd, "These were sure to be despised;
"That of the love her husband once possess'd,
"Not the least spark was living in his breast;
"The boy repented, and grew savage soon:
"There never shone for her a honeymoon.
"Soon as he came, his cares all fix'd on one,
"Himself, and all his passion was a gun;
"And though he shot as he did all beside,
"It still remain'd his only joy and pride.
"He left her there,—she knew not where he went,—
"But knew full well he should the slight repent;
"She was not one his daily taunts to bear,
"He made the house a hell that he should share;
"For, till he gave her power herself to please,
"Never for him should be a moment's ease."

"He loves you, child!" the softening father cried:
"He loves himself, and not a soul beside;
"Loves me!—why, yes, and so he did the pears
"You caught him stealing—would he had the fears!
"Would you could make him tremble for his life,
"And then to you return the stolen wife,
"Richly endow'd—but, O! the idiot knows
"The worth of every penny he bestows.

"Were he but fool alone, I 'd find a way
"To govern him, at least to have my day;
"Or were he only brute, I 'd watch the hour,
"And make the brute-affection yield me power;
"But silly both and savage—O! my heart!
"It is too great a trial!—we must part."
"Oblige the savage by some act!"—"The debt,
"You find, the fool will instantly forget:
"Oblige the fool with kindness or with praise,
"And you the passions of the savage raise."
"Time will do much."—"Can time my name restore?"
"Have patience, child."—"I am a child no more,
"Nor more dependent; but, at woman's age,
"I feel that wrongs provoke me and enrage:
"Sir, could you bring me comfort, I were cool;
"But keep your counsel for your boys at school."

The Doctor then departed,—Why remain
To hear complaints, who could himself complain,
Who felt his actions wrong, and knew his efforts vain?

The sullen youth, contending with his fate,
Began the darling of his heart to hate:
Her pretty looks, her auburn braid, her face,
All now remain'd the proofs of his disgrace;
While, more than hateful in his vixen's eyes,
He saw her comforts from his griefs arise;
Who felt a joy she strove not to conceal,
When their expenses made her miser feel.

War was perpetual: on a first attack
She gain'd advantage, he would turn his back;
And when her small-shot whistled in his ears,
He felt a portion of his early fears;
But if he turn'd him in the battle's heat,
And fought in earnest, hers was then defeat;
His strength of oath and curse brought little harm,
But there was no resisting strength of arm.

Yet wearied both with war, and vex'd at heart,
The slaves of passion judged it best to part:
Long they debated, nor could fix a rate
For a man's peace with his contending mate;
But mutual hatred, scorn, and fear, assign'd
That price—that peace it was not theirs to find.

The watchful husband lived in constant hope
To hear the wife had ventured to elope;
But though not virtuous, nor in much discreet,
He found her coldness would such views defeat;
And thus, by self-reproof and avarice scourged,
He wore the galling chains his folly forged.

The wife her pleasures, few and humble, sought,
And with anticipated stipend bought;
Without a home, at fashion's call she fled
To a hired lodging and a widow'd bed:
Husband and parents banish'd from her mind,
She seeks for pleasures that she cannot find;
And grieves that so much treachery was employ'd
To gain a man who has her peace destroy'd.

Yet more the grieving father feels distress,
His error greater, and his motives less;
He finds too late, by stooping to deceit,
It is ourselves, and not the world, we cheat;
For, though we blind it, yet we can but feel
That we have something evil to conceal;
Nor can we by our utmost care be sure
That we can hide the sufferings we endure.[1]

BOOK XVI.

LADY BARBARA; OR, THE GHOST.

Introductory Discourse—For what purpose would a Ghost appear?—How the purpose would be answered—The Fact admitted, would not Doubts return?—Family Stories of Apparitions—Story of Lady Barbara—Her Widowhood—Resides with a Priest—His Family—A favourite Boy—His Education—His Fondness for the Lady—It becomes Love—His Reflections—His Declaration—Her Reply—Her Relation—Why she must not marry a second time—How warned—Tokens of the Appearance—The Lover argues with the Lady—His Success—The Consequences of it.

THE Brothers spoke of Ghosts,—a favourite theme
With those who love to reason or to dream;
And they, as greater men were wont to do,
Felt strong desire to think the stories true:

[1] ["Gretna Green is a strong picture of the happiness that may be expected from a premature marriage between a silly mercenary girl and a brutal self-willed boy."—JEFFREY.]

Stories of spirits freed, who came to prove
To spirits bound in flesh that yet they love,
To give them notice of the things below,
Which we must wonder how they came to know,
Or, known, would think of coming to relate
To creatures who are tried by unknown fate.

"Warning," said Richard, "seems the only thing
"That would a spirit on an errand bring:
"To turn a guilty mind from wrong to right
"A ghost might come, at least I think it might."

"But," said the Brother, "if we here are tried,
"A spirit sent would put that law aside:
"It gives to some advantage others need,
"Or hurts the sinner should it not succeed:
"If from the dead, said Dives, one were sent
"To warn my brethren, sure they would repent;
"But Abraham answered, If they now reject
"The guides they have, no more would that effect;
"Their doubts too obstinate for grace would prove,
"For wonder hardens hearts it fails to move.

"Suppose a sinner in an hour of gloom,
"And let a ghost with all its horrors come;
"From lips unmoved let solemn accents flow,
"Solemn his gesture be, his motion slow;
"Let the waved hand and threatening look impart
"Truth to the mind and terror to the heart;
"And, when the form is fading to the view,
"Let the convicted man cry, 'This is true!'

"Alas! how soon would doubts again invade
"The willing mind, and sins again persuade!
"I saw it—What?—I was awake, but how?
"Not as I am, or I should see it now:
"It spoke, I think,—I thought, at least it spoke,—
"And look'd alarming—yes, I felt the look.
"But then in sleep those horrid forms[1] arise,
"That the soul sees,—and, we suppose, the eyes,—
"And the soul hears,—the senses then thrown by,
"She is herself the ear, herself the eye;[2]
"A mistress so will free her servile race
"For their own tasks, and take herself the place:
"In sleep what forms will ductile fancy take,
"And what so common as to dream awake?
"On others thus do ghostly guests intrude?
"Or why am I by such advice pursued?

"One out of millions who exist, and why
"They know not—cannot know—and such am I;
"And shall two beings of two worlds, to meet,
"The laws of one, perhaps of both, defeat?
"It cannot be.—But if some being lives
"Who such kind warning to a favourite gives,
"Let him these doubts from my dull spirit clear,
"And once again, expected guest! appear.

"And if a second time the power complied,
"Why is a third, and why a fourth, denied?
"Why not a warning ghost for ever at our side?
"Ah, foolish being! thou hast truth enough,—
"Augmented guilt would rise on greater proof;
"Blind and imperious passion disbelieves,
"Or madly scorns the warning it receives,
"Or looks for pardon ere the ill be done,
"Because 't is vain to strive our fate to shun;
"In spite of ghosts, predestined woes would come,
"And warning add new terrors to our doom.

"Yet there are tales that would remove our doubt,
"The whisper'd tales that circulate about,
"That in some noble mansion take their rise,
"And, told with secrecy and awe, surprise:
"It seems not likely people should advance,
"For falsehood's sake, such train of circumstance;
"Then the ghosts bear them with a ghost-like grace,
"That suits the person, character, and place.

"But let us something of the kind recite:
"What think you, now, of Lady Barbara's spright?"[3]

"I know not what to think; but I have heard
"A ghost, to warn her or advise, appear'd;
"And that she sought a friend before she died,
"To whom she might the awful fact confide,
"Who seal'd and secret should the story keep
"Till Lady Barbara slept her final sleep,
"In that close bed that never spirit shakes,
"Nor ghostly visiter the sleeper wakes."

"Yes, I can give that story, not so well
"As your old woman would the legend tell,
"But as the facts are stated; and now hear
"How ghosts advise, and widows persevere."

When her lord died, who had so kind a heart,
That any woman would have grieved to part,

1 ["I would not appear to myself superstitious. I returned late last night, and my reflections were as cheerful as such company could make them, and not, I am afraid, of the most humiliating kind; yet for the first time these many nights I was incommoded by dreams, such as would cure vanity for a time in any mind where they could gain admission. Some of Baxter's mortifying spirits whispered very singular combinations—none, indeed, that actually did happen in the very worst of times, but still with a formidable resemblance. It is doubtless very proper to have the mind thus brought to a sense of its real and possible alliances, and the evils it has encountered, or might have had: but why these images should be *given at a time* when the thoughts, the waking thoughts, were *of so opposite* a nature, I cannot account. So it was. Awake, I had been with the high, the apparently happy: we were very pleasantly engaged, and my last thoughts were cheerful. Asleep, all was misery and degradation, not my own only, but of those who had been.—That horrible image of servility and baseness—that mercenary and commercial manner! It is the work of imagination, I suppose; but it is very strange."—*Crabbe's Diary*, July 21, 1817.]

2 ["Strange state of being! (for 't is still to be)
"Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to see."
BYRON, 1821.]

3 [Original MS.:—
The Brothers dwelt upon their favourite themes
Of ghosts, and spectres, demons, devils, dreams;
These to all kinds of ghostly subjects led,
Things we believe not, yet we ever dread,
At which our reason halts, by which our fears are led;
"Sometimes," said George, "the ghost and dream unite,
"As was the case with Lady Barbara's spright."]

It had such influence on his widow's mind,
That she the pleasures of the world resign'd,
Young as she was, and from the busy town
Came to the quiet of a village down;
Not as insensible to joys, but still
With a subdued but half-rebellious will;
For she had passions warm, and feeling strong,
With a right mind, that dreaded to be wrong;—
Yet she had wealth to tie her to the place
Where it procures delight and veils disgrace;
Yet she had beauty to engage the eye,
A widow still in her minority;
Yet she had merit worthy men to gain,
And yet her hand no merit could obtain;
For, though secluded, there were trials made,
When he who soften'd most could not persuade;
A while she hearken'd as her swain proposed,
And then his suit with strong refusal closed.

"Thanks, and farewell!—give credit to my word,
"That I shall die the widow of my lord;
"'T is my own will, I now prefer the state,—
"If mine should change, it is the will of fate."

Such things were spoken, and the hearers cried,
"'T is very strange,—perhaps she may be tried."

The lady pass'd her time in taking air,
In working, reading, charities, and prayer;
In the last duties she received the aid
Of an old friend, a priest, with whom she pray'd;
And to his mansion with a purpose went,
That there should life be innocently spent;
Yet no cold vot'ress of the cloister she,
Warm her devotion, warm her charity;
The face the index of a feeling mind,
And her whole conduct rational and kind.

Though rich and noble, she was pleased to slide
Into the habits of her reverend guide,
And so attended to his girls and boys,
She seem'd a mother in her fears and joys;
On her they look'd with fondness, something check'd
By her appearance, that engaged respect;
For still she dress'd as one of higher race,
And her sweet smiles had dignity and grace.

George was her favourite, and it gave her joy
To indulge and to instruct the darling boy;
To watch, to soothe, to check the forward child,
Who was at once affectionate and wild;
Happy and grateful for her tender care,
And pleased her thoughts and company to share.

George was a boy with spirit strong and high,
With handsome face, and penetrating eye;
O'er his broad forehead hung his locks of brown,
That gave a spirit to his boyish frown.
"My little man" were words that she applied
To him, and he received with growing pride;
Her darling even from his infant years
Had something touching in his smiles and tears;
And in his boyish manners he began
To show the pride that was not made for man;
But it became the child, the mother cried,
And the kind lady said it was not pride.

George, to his cost, though sometimes to his praise,
Was quite a hero in these early days,
And would return from heroes just as stout,
Blood in his crimson cheek, and blood without.
"What! he submit to vulgar boys and low—
"He bear an insult, he forget a blow!
"They call'd him Parson—let his father bear
"His own reproach, it was his proper care:
"He was no parson, but he still would teach
"The boys their manners, and yet would not preach."

The father, thoughtful of the time foregone,
Was loth to damp the spirit of his son;
Rememb'ring he himself had early laurels won;
The mother, frighten'd, begg'd him to refrain,
And not his credit or his linen stain;
While the kind friend so gently blamed the deed,
He smiled in tears, and wish'd her to proceed;
For the boy pleased her, and that roguish eye
And daring look were cause of many a sigh,
When she had thought how much would such quick temper try:
And oft she felt a kind of gathering gloom,
Sad, and prophetic of the ills to come.

Years fled unmark'd: the lady taught no more
Th' adopted tribe as she was wont before;
But by her help the school the lasses sought,
And by the Vicar's self the boy was taught;
Not unresisting when that cursed Greek
Ask'd so much time for words that none will speak.

"What can men worse for mortal brain contrive
"Than thus a hard dead language to revive!
"Heav'ns, if a language once be fairly dead,
"Let it be buried, not preserved and read,
"The bane of every boy to decent station bred;
"If any good these crabbed books contain,
"Translate them well, and let them then remain;
"To one huge vault convey the useless store,
"Then lose the key, and never find it more."

Something like this the lively boy express'd,
When Homer was his torment and his jest.

"George," said the father, "can at pleasure seize
"The point he wishes, and with too much ease;
"And hence, depending on his powers, and vain,
"He wastes the time that he will sigh to gain."
The partial widow thought the wasted days
He would recover, urged by love and praise;
And thus absolved, the boy, with grateful mind,
Repaid a love so useful and so blind:
Her angry words he loved, although he fear'd,
And words not angry doubly kind appear'd.

George, then on manhood verging, felt the charms
Of war, and kindled at the world's alarms;
Yet war was then, though spreading wide and far,
A state of peace to what has since been war;
'T was then some dubious claim at sea or land,
That placed a weapon in a warrior's hand;
But in these times the causes of our strife
Are hearth and altar, liberty and life.

George, when from college he return'd, and heard
His father's questions, cool and shy appear'd.
"Who had the honours?"—"Honour!" said the youth,
"Honour at college!—very good, in truth!"
"What hours to study did he give?"—He gave
Enough to feel they made him like a slave.
In fact, the Vicar found, if George should rise,
'T was not by college rules and exercise.

"At least the time for your degree abide,
"And be ordain'd," the man of peace replied;
"Then you may come and aid me while I keep,
"And watch, and shear th' hereditary sheep;
"Choose then your spouse."—That heard the youth, and sigh'd,
Nor to aught else attended or replied.

George had of late indulged unusual fears
And dangerous hopes: he wept unconscious tears;—
Whether for camp or college, well he knew
He must at present bid his friends adieu;
His father, mother, sisters, could he part
With these, and feel no sorrow at his heart?
But from that lovely lady could he go?
That fonder, fairer, dearer mother?—No!
For while his father spoke, he fix'd his eyes
On that dear face, and felt a warmth arise,
A trembling flush of joy, that he could ill disguise—
Then ask'd himself from whence this growing bliss,
This new-found joy, and all that waits on this?
"Why sinks that voice so sweetly in mine ear?
"What makes it now a livelier joy to hear?
"Why gives that touch?—still, still do I retain
"The fierce delight that tingled through each vein:
"Why at her presence with such quickness flows
"The vital current?—Well a lover knows.

"O! tell me not of years,—can she be old?
"Those eyes, those lips, can man unmoved behold?
"Has time that bosom chill'd? are cheeks so rosy cold?
"No, she is young, or I her love t' engage
"Will grow discreet, and that will seem like age:
"But speak it not; Death's equalising arm
"Levels not surer than Love's stronger charm,
"That bids all inequalities be gone,
"That laughs at rank, that mocks comparison.

"There is not young or old, if Love decrees;
"He levels orders, he confounds degrees:
"There is not fair, or dark, or short, or tall,
"Or grave, or sprightly—Love reduces all;
"He makes unite the pensive and the gay,
"Gives something here, takes something there away;
"From each abundant good a portion takes,
"And for each want a compensation makes;
"Then tell me not of years—Love, power divine,
"Takes, as he wills, from hers, and gives to mine."

And she, in truth, was lovely—Time had strown
No snows on her, though he so long had flown;
The purest damask blossom'd in her cheek,
The eyes said all that eyes are wont to speak:
Her pleasing person she with care adorn'd,
Nor arts that stay the flying graces scorn'd;
Nor held it wrong these graces to renew,
Or give the fading rose its opening hue;
Yet few there were who needed less the art
To hide an error, or a grace impart.

George, yet a child, her faultless form admired,
And call'd his fondness love, as truth required;
But now, when conscious of the secret flame,
His bosom's pain, he dared not give the name;
In her the mother's milder passion grew,
Tender she was, but she was placid too;
From him the mild and filial love was gone,
And a strong passion came in triumph on.

"Will she," he cried, "this impious love allow?
"And, once my mother, be my mistress now?
"The parent-spouse? how far the thought from her!
"And how can I the daring wish aver?
"When first I speak it, how will those dear eyes
"Gleam with awaken'd horror and surprise;
"Will she not, angry and indignant, fly
"From my imploring call, and bid me die?
"Will she not shudder at the thought, and say,
"My son! and lift her eyes to heaven, and pray?

"Alas! I fear—and yet my soul she won
"While she with fond endearments call'd me son!
"Then first I felt—yet knew that I was wrong—
"This hope, at once so guilty and so strong:
"She gave—I feel it now—a mother's kiss,
"And quickly fancy took a bolder bliss;
"But hid the burning blush, for fear that eye
"Should see the transport, and the bliss deny:
"O! when she knows the purpose I conceal,
"When my fond wishes to her bosom steal,
"How will that angel fear? how will the woman feel?

"And yet, perhaps, this instant, while I speak,
"She knows the pain I feel, the cure I seek;
"Better than I she may my feelings know,
"And nurse the passion that she dares not show;
"She reads the look,—and sure my eyes have shown
"To her the power and triumph of her own;
"And in maternal love she veils the flame
"That she will heal with joy, yet hear with shame.[4]

"Come, let me then—no more a son—reveal
"The daring hope, and for her favour kneel;
"Let me in ardent speech my meanings dress,
"And, while I mourn the fault, my love confess;
"And, once confess'd, no more that hope resign,
"For she or misery henceforth must be mine.

[4] [In the original MS. :—
"Yet when I look upon that face divine,
"Say, can I wish the goddess-mother mine?
"She who, like Venus, should provide me arms
"Against my foe—not bring me greater harms."]

"O! what confusion shall I see advance
"On that dear face, responsive to my glance!
"Sure she can love!"
In fact, the youth was right;
She could, but love was dreadful in her sight;
Love like a spectre in her view appear'd,
The nearer he approach'd the more she fear'd.

But knew she, then, this dreaded love? She guess'd
That he had guilt—she knew he had not rest;
She saw a fear that she could ill define,
And nameless terrors in his looks combine;
It is a state that cannot long endure,
And yet both parties dreaded to be sure.

All views were pass'd of priesthood and a gown,
George, fix'd on glory, now prepar'd for town;
But first this mighty hazard must be run,
And more than glory either lost or won:
Yet, what was glory? Could he win that heart
And gain that hand, what cause was there to part?
Her love afforded all that life affords—
Honour and fame were phantasies and words.

But he must see her—She alone was seen
In the still evening of a day serene:
In the deep shade beyond the garden walk
They met, and, talking, ceased and fear'd to talk;
At length she spoke of parent's love,—and now
He hazards all. "No parent, lady, thou!
"None, none to me! but looks so fond and mild
"Would well become the parent of my child."

She gasp'd for breath—then sat as one resolved
On some high act, and then the means revolved.

"It cannot be, my George, my child, my son!
"The thought is misery!—Guilt and misery shun:
"Far from us both be such design, oh, far!
"Let it not pain us at the awful bar,
"Where souls are tried, where known the mother's part
"That I sustain, and all of either heart.
"To wed with thee I must all shame efface,
"And part with female dignity and grace:
"Was I not told, by one who knew so well
"This rebel heart, that it must not rebel?
"Were I not warn'd, yet Reason's voice would cry,
"'Retreat, resolve, and from the danger fly!'
"If Reason spoke not, yet would woman's pride—
"A woman will by better counsel guide;
"And should both Pride and Prudence plead in vain,
"There is a warning that must still remain,
"And, though the heart rebell'd, would ever cry 'Refrain!'"

He heard, he grieved: so check'd, the eager youth
Dared not again repeat th' offensive truth,
But stopp'd, and fix'd on that loved face an eye
Of pleading passion, trembling to reply:
And that reply was hurried, was express'd
With bursts of sorrow from a troubled breast;
He could not yet forbear the tender suit,
And dare not speak—his eloquence was mute.

But this not long,—again the passion rose
In him, in her the spirit to oppose:
Yet was she firm; and he, who fear'd the calm
Of resolution, purposed to alarm,
And make her dread a passion strong and wild—
He fear'd her firmness while her looks were mild:
Therefore he strongly, warmly urged his prayer,
Till she, less patient, urged him to forbear.

"I tell thee, George, as I have told before,
"I feel a mother's love, and feel no more;
"A child I bore thee in my arms, and how
"Could I—did prudence yield—receive thee now?"

At her remonstrance hope revived, for oft
He found her words severe, her accents soft;
In eyes that threaten'd tears of pity stood,
And truth she made as gracious as she could;—
But, when she found the dangerous youth would seek
His peace alone, and still his wishes speak,
Fearful she grew, that, opening thus his heart,
He might to hers a dangerous warmth impart;
All her objections slight to him appear'd,—
But one she had, and now it must be heard.

"Yes, it must be! and he shall understand
"What powers, that are not of the world, command;
"So shall he cease, and I in peace shall live—"
Sighing she spoke—"that widowhood can give!"
Then to her lover turn'd, and gravely said,
"Let due attention to my words be paid:
"Meet me to-morrow, and resolve t' obey;"
Then named the hour and place, and went her way.
Before that hour, or moved by spirit vain
Of woman's wish to triumph and complain,
She had his parents summon'd, and had shown
Their son's strong wishes, nor conceal'd her own:
"And do you give," she said, "a parent's aid
"To make the youth of his strange love afraid;
"And, be it sin or not, be all the shame display'd."

The good old Pastor wonder'd, seem'd to grieve,
And look'd suspicious on this child of Eve:
He judged his boy, though wild, had never dared
To talk of love, had not rebuke been spared;
But he replied, in mild and tender tone,
"It is not sin, and therefore shame has none."

The different ages of the pair he knew,
And quite as well their different fortunes too:
A meek, just man; but difference in his sight
That made the match unequal made it right:
"His son, his friend, united and become
"Of his own hearth—the comforts of his home—
"Was it so wrong? Perhaps it was her pride
"That felt the distance, and the youth denied?"

The blushing widow heard, and she retired,
Musing on what her ancient friend desired;
She could not, therefore, to the youth complain,
That his good father wish'd him to refrain;
She could not add, "Your parents, George, obey,
"They will your absence"—no such will had they.

Now, in th' appointed minute met the pair,
Foredoom'd to meet: George made the lover's pray'r,—
That was heard kindly; then the lady tried
For a calm spirit, felt it, and replied.

" George, that I love thee why should I suppress?
" For 't is a love that virtue may profess—
" Parental,—frown not,—tender, fix'd, sincere;
" Thou art for dearer ties by much too dear,
" And nearer must not be, thou art so very near:
" Nay, does not reason, prudence, pride, agree,
" Our very feelings, that it must not be?
" Nay, look not so,—I shun the task no more,
" But will to thee thy better self restore.

" Then hear, and hope not; to the tale I tell
" Attend! obey me, and let all be well:
" Love is forbid to me, and thou wilt find
" All thy too ardent views must be resign'd;[5]
" Then from thy bosom all such thoughts remove,
" And spare the curse of interdicted love.
" If doubts at first assail thee, wait a while,
" Nor mock my sadness with satiric smile:
" For, if not much of other worlds we know,
" Nor how a spirit speaks in this below,
" Still there is speech and intercourse; and now
" The truth of what I tell I first avow,—
" True will I be in all, and be attentive thou.

" I was a Ratcliffe, taught and train'd to live
" In all the pride that ancestry can give;
" My only brother, when our mother died,
" Fill'd the dear offices of friend and guide;
" My father early taught us all he dared,
" And for his bolder flights our minds prepared:
" He read the works of deists, every book
" From crabbed Hobbes to courtly Bolingbroke;
" And when we understood not, he would cry,
" ' Let the expressions in your memory lie,
" ' The light will soon break in, and you will find
" ' Rest for your spirits, and be strong of mind!'

" Alas! however strong, however weak,
" The rest was something we had still to seek!
" He taught us duties of no arduous kind,
" The easy morals of the doubtful mind;
" He bade us all our childish fears control,
" And drive the nurse and grandam from the soul;
" Told us the word of God was all we saw,
" And that the law of nature was his law;
" This law of nature we might find abstruse,
" But gain sufficient for our common use.
" Thus by persuasion we our duties learn'd,
" And were but little in the cause concern'd.

" We lived in peace, in intellectual ease,
" And thought that virtue was the way to please,
" And pure morality the keeping free
" From all the stains of vulgar villany.
" But Richard, dear enthusiast! shunn'd reproach,
" He let no stain upon his name encroach;
" But fled the hated vice, was kind and just,
" That all must love him, and that all might trust.

" Free, sad discourse was ours; we often sigh'd,
" To think we could not in some truths confide.
" Our father's final words gave no content,
" We found not what his self-reliance meant.
" To fix our faith some grave relations sought;
" Doctrines and creeds of various kinds they brought,
" And we as children heard what they as doctors taught.[6]

" Some to the priest referr'd us, in whose book
" No unbeliever could resisting look;
" Others to some great preacher's, who could tame
" The fiercest mind, and set the cold on flame;
" For him no rival in dispute was found
" Whom he could not confute or not confound.

" Some mystics told us of the sign and seal,
" And what the Spirit would in time reveal,
" If we had grace to wait, if we had hearts to feel:
" Others, to Reason trusting, said, ' Believe
" ' As she directs, and what she proves receive;'
" While many told us, ' It is all but guess;
" ' Stick to your church, and calmly acquiesce.'

" Thus doubting, wearied, hurried, and perplex'd,
" This world was lost in thinking of the next:
" When spoke my brother—' From my soul I hate
" ' This clash of thought, this ever-doubting state;
" ' For ever seeking certainty, yet blind
" ' In our research, and puzzled when we find.
" ' Could not some spirit, in its kindness, steal
" ' Back to our world, and some dear truth reveal?
" ' Say there is danger,—if it could be done,
" ' Sure one would venture—I would be the one;
" ' And when a spirit—much as spirits might—
" ' I would to thee communicate my light!'

" I sought my daring brother to oppose,
" But awful gladness in my bosom rose:
" I feared my wishes; but through all my frame
" A bold and elevating terror came:
" Yet with dissembling prudence I replied,
" ' Know we the laws that may be thus defied?
" ' Should the free spirit to th' embodied tell
" ' The precious secret, would it not rebel?'
" Yet while I spoke I felt a pleasing glow
" Suffuse my cheek at what I long'd to know;
" And I, like Eve transgressing, grew more bold,
" And wish'd to hear a spirit and behold.

[5] [MS.:—
" Hear, then, and hope not! to the tale I tell
" Belongs the warning on the gates of hell,
" ' This is no place for hope!' the guilt above
" Excludes it here. Oh! now the guilt remove,
" And fear the curse of interdicted love."]

[6] [MS.:—
" Some to the dean referr'd us, who had made
" An atheist mad, so well could he persuade:
" Others to Doctor Bowles's powerful art,
" Who found an entrance in the hardest heart."]

" ' I have no friend,' said he; ' to not one man
" ' Can I appear: but, love! to thee I can:
" ' Who first shall die '——I wept,—but ' I agree
" ' To all thou say'st, dear Richard! and would be
" ' The first to wing my way, and bring my news
to thee.'

" Long we conversed, but not till we perceived
" A gathering gloom—Our freedom gain'd, we
grieved;
" Above the vulgar, as we judged, in mind,
" Below in peace, more sad as more refined;
" 'Twas joy, 'twas sin—Offenders at the time,
" We felt the hurried pleasure of our crime,
" With pain that crime creates, and this in both—
" Our mind united as the strongest oath.

" O, my dear George! in ceasing to obey,
" Misery and trouble meet us in our way!
" I felt as one intruding in a scene
" Where none should be, where none had ever
been;
" Like our first parent, I was new to sin,
" But plainly felt its sufferings begin:
" In nightly dreams I walk'd on soil unsound,
" And in my day-dreams endless error found.

" With this dear brother I was doom'd to part,
" Who, with a husband, shared a troubled heart:
" My lord I honour'd; but I never proved
" The madd'ning joy, the boast of some who
loved:
" It was a marriage that our friends profess'd
" Would be most happy, and I acquiesced;
" And we were happy, for our love was calm,
" Not life's delicious essence, but its balm.
" My brother left us—dear unhappy boy!
" He never seem'd to taste of earthly joy,
" Never to live on earth, but ever strove
" To gain some tidings of a world above.

" Parted from him, I found no more to please;
" Ease was my object, and I dwelt in ease;
" And thus in quiet, not perhaps content,
" A year in wedlock—lingering time!—was spent.

" One night I slept not, but I courted sleep,
" And forced my thoughts on tracks they could not
keep;
" Till nature, wearied in the strife, reposed,
" And deep forgetfulness my wanderings closed.

" My lord was absent—distant from the bed
" A pendent lamp its soften'd lustre shed;
" But there was light that chased away the gloom,
" And brought to view each object in the room:
" These I observed ere yet I sank in sleep,
" That, if disturb'd not, had been long and deep.

" I was awaken'd by some being nigh,—
" It seem'd some voice,—and gave a timid cry;
" When sounds, that I describe not, slowly broke
" On my attention——' Be composed, and look!'
" I strove, and I succeeded; look'd with awe,
" But yet with firmness, and my brother saw.

" George, why that smile?—By all that God has
done,
" By the great Spirit, by the blessed Son,
" By the one holy Three, by the thrice holy One,
" I saw my brother,—saw him by my bed,—
" And every doubt in full conviction fled!
" It was his own mild spirit—He a while
" Waited my calmness with benignant smile.
" So softly shines the veiled sun, till past
" The cloud, and light upon the world is cast:
" That look composed and soften'd I survey'd,
" And met the glance fraternal less afraid;
" Though in those looks was something of com-
mand,
" And traits of what I fear'd to understand.

" Then spoke the spirit—George, I pray, at-
tend—
" ' First, let all doubts of thy religion end:
" ' The word revealed is true: inquire no more;
" ' Believe in meekness, and with thanks adore:
" ' Thy priest attend, but not in all rely,
" ' And to objectors seek for no reply;
" ' Truth, doubt, and error will be mix'd below—
" ' Be thou content the greater truths to know,
" ' And in obedience rest thee——For thy life
" ' Thou needest counsel—now a happy wife,
" ' A widow soon! and then, my sister, then,
" ' Think not of marriage, think no more of men:—
" ' Life will have comforts; thou wilt much enjoy
" ' Of moderate good; then do not this destroy:
" ' Fear much, and wed no more; by passion led,
" ' Shouldst thou again'—art thou attending?—
' wed,
" ' Care in thy ways will growl, and anguish haunt
thy bed:
" ' A brother's warning on thy heart engrave:
" ' Thou art a mistress—then be not a slave!
" ' Shouldst thou again that hand in fondness give,
" ' What life of misery art thou doom'd to live!
" ' How wilt thou weep, lament, implore, com-
plain!
" ' How wilt thou meet derision and disdain!
" ' And pray to Heaven in doubt, and kneel to
man in vain!
" ' Thou read'st of woes to tender bosoms sent—
" ' Thine shall with tenfold agony be rent;
" ' Increase of anguish shall new years bestow,
" ' Pain shall on thought and grief on reason grow,
" ' And this th' advice I give increase the ill I
show.'

" ' A second marriage!—No!—by all that's
dear!'
" I cried aloud—The spirit bade me hear.
" ' There will be trial,—how I must not say,
" ' Perhaps I cannot—listen, and obey!
" ' Free is thy will—th' event I cannot see,
" ' Distinctly cannot, but thy will is free.
" ' Come, weep not, sister—spirits can but guess,
" ' And not ordain—but do not wed distress;
" ' For who would rashly venture on a snare?'

" ' I swear!' I answer'd.—' No, thou must not
swear,'
" He said, or I had sworn; but still the vow
" Was past, was in my mind, and there is now:

" Never! O, never:—Why that sullen air?
" Think'st thou — ungenerous! — I would wed
despair?

" Was it not told me thus?—and then I cried,
" 'Art thou in bliss?'—but nothing he replied,
" Save of my fate, for that he came to show,
" Nor of aught else permitted me to know.
" 'Forewarn'd, forearm thee, and thy way pursue,
" 'Safe, if thou wilt, not flowery—now, adieu!'

" 'Nay, go not thus,' I cried, 'for this will
seem
" 'The work of sleep, a mere impressive dream;
" 'Give me some token, that I may indeed
" 'From the suggestions of my doubts be freed!'

" 'Be this a token—ere the week be fled
" 'Shall tidings greet thee from the newly dead.'

" 'Nay, but,' I said, with courage not my own,
" 'O! be some signal of thy presence shown;
" 'Let not this visit with the rising day
" 'Pass, and be melted like a dream away.'

" 'O, woman! woman! ever anxious still
" 'To gain the knowledge, not to curb the will!
" 'Have I not promised?—Child of sin, attend—
" 'Make not a lying spirit of thy friend:
" 'Give me thy hand!'——I gave it, for my soul
" Was now grown ardent, and above control;
" Eager I stretch'd it forth, and felt the hold
" Of shadowy fingers, more than icy cold:
" A nameless pressure on my wrist was made,
" And instant vanish'd the beloved shade!
" Strange it will seem, but, ere the morning came,
" I slept, nor felt disorder in my frame:
" Then came a dream—I saw my father's shade,
" But not with awe like that my brother's made;
" And he began—'What! made a convert, child?
" 'Have they my favourite by their creed be-
guiled?
" 'Thy brother's weakness I could well foresee,
" 'But had, my girl, more confidence in thee:
" 'Art thou, indeed, before their ark to bow?
" 'I smiled before, but I am angry now:
" 'Thee will they bind by threats, and thou wilt
shake
" 'At tales of terror that the miscreants make:
" 'Between the bigot and enthusiast led,
" 'Thou hast a world of miseries to dread.
" 'Think for thyself, nor let the knaves or fools
" 'Rob thee of reason, and prescribe thee rules.'

" Soon as I woke, and could my thoughts
collect,
" What can I think, I cried, or what reject?
" Was it my brother? Aid me, power divine!
" Have I not seen him, left he not a sign?
" Did I not then the placid features trace
" That now remain—the air, the eye, the face?
" And then my father—but how different seem
" These visitations—this, indeed, a dream!

" Then for that token on my wrist—'t is here,
" And very slight to you it must appear;
" Here, I 'll withdraw the bracelet—'t is a speck!
" No more! but 't is upon my life a check."

" O! lovely all, and like its sister arm!
" Call this a check, dear lady? 't is a charm—
" A slight, an accidental mark—no more."
" Slight as it is, it was not there before:
" Then was there weakness, and I bound it——
Nay!
" This is infringement—take those lips away!

" On the fourth day came letters, and I cried,
" Richard is dead, and named the day he died:
" A proof of knowledge, *true*! but one, alas! of
pride.
" The signs to me were brought, and not my lord,
" But I, impatient, waited not the word;
" And much he marvell'd, reading of the night
" In which th' immortal spirit took its flight

" Yes! I beheld my brother at my bed
" The hour he died! the instant he was dead—
" His presence now I see! now trace him as he
fled.

" Ah! fly me, George, in very pity, fly;
" Thee I reject, but yield thee reasons why;
" Our fate forbids,—the counsel Heaven has sent
" We must adopt, or grievously repent;
" And I adopt."——George humbly bow'd, and
sigh'd,
But, lost in thought, he look'd not nor replied;
Yet feebly utter'd in his sad adieu,
" I must not doubt thy truth, but perish if thou 'rt
true."
But when he thought alone, his terror gone
Of the strange story, better views came on.

" Nay, my enfeebled heart, be not dismay'd!
" A boy again, am I of ghosts afraid?
" Does she believe it? Say she does believe;
" Is she not born of error and of Eve?
" Oh! there is lively hope I may the cause retrieve.

" 'If you re-wed'——exclaim'd the Ghost.
For what
" Puts he the case, if marry she will not?
" He knows her fate—but what am I about?
" Do I believe?—'t is certain I have doubt,
" And so has she,—what therefore will she do?
" She the predicted fortune will pursue,
" And by th' event will judge if her strange
dream was true;
" The strong temptation to her thought applied
" Will gain new strength, and will not be denied;
" The very threat against the thing we love
" Will the vex'd spirit to resistance move;
" With vows to virtue weakness will begin,
" And fears of sinning let in thoughts of sin."

Strong in her sense of weakness, now withdrew
The cautious lady from the lover's view;
But she perceived the looks of all were changed,—
Her kind old friends grew peevish and estranged:
A fretful spirit reign'd, and discontent
From room to room in sullen silence went;
And the kind widow was distress'd at heart
To think that she no comfort could impart:
" But he will go," she said, " and he will strive
" In fields of glorious energy to drive

" Love from his bosom.—Yes, I then may stay,
" And all will thank me on a future day."

So judged the lady, nor appear'd to grieve,
Till the young soldier came to take his leave;
But not of all assembled—No! he found
His gentle sisters all in sorrow drown'd;
With many a shaken hand, and many a kiss,
He cried, " Farewell! a solemn business this;
" Nay, Susan, Sophy!—heaven and earth, my dears!
" I am a soldier—what do I with tears?"

He sought his parents;—they together walk'd,
And of their son, his views and dangers, talk'd;
They knew not how to blame their friend, but still
They murmur'd, " She may save us if she will:
" Were not these visions working in her mind
" Strange things—'t is in her nature to be kind."

Their son appear'd.—He soothed them, and was bless'd,
But still the fondness of his soul confess'd.
And where the lady?—To her room retired!
" Now show, dear son, the courage she required."

George bow'd in silence, trying for assent
To his hard fate, and to his trial went:
Fond, but yet fix'd, he found her in her room;
Firm, and yet fearful, she beheld him come:
Nor sought he favour now—No! he would meet his doom.

" Farewell! and, madam, I beseech you pray
" That this sad spirit soon may pass away;
" That sword or ball would to the dust restore
" This body, that the soul may grieve no more
" For love rejected.—Oh! that I could quit
" The life I loathe, who am for nothing fit,
" No, not to die!"—" Unhappy, wilt thou make
" The house all wretched for thy passion's sake?
" And most its grieving object?"—
" Grieving?—No!
" Or as a conqueror mourns a dying foe,
" That makes his triumph sure.—Couldst thou deplore
" The evil done, the pain would be no more;
" But an accursed dream has steel'd thy breast,
" And all the woman in thy soul suppress'd."

" Oh! it was vision, George; a vision true
" As ever seer or holy prophet knew."

" Can spirits, lady, though they might alarm,
" Make an impression on that lovely arm?
" A little cold the cause, a little heat,
" Or vein minute, or artery's morbid beat,
" Even beauty these admit."—
" I did behold
" My brother's form."—
" Yes, so thy Fancy told,
" When in the morning she her work survey'd,
" And call'd the doubtful memory to her aid."

" Nay, think! the night he died—the very night!"—
" 'T is very true, and so perchance he might,
" But in thy mind—not, lady, in thy sight!
" Thou wert not well; forms delicately made
" These dreams and fancies easily invade;
" The mind and body feel the slow disease,
" And dreams are what the troubled fancy sees."
" Oh, but how strange that all should be combined!"—
" True; but such combinations we may find;
" A dream's predicted number gain'd a prize,
" Yet dreams make no impression on the wise,
" Though some chance good, some lucky gain may rise."

" Oh! but those words, that voice so truly known!"—
" No doubt, dear lady, they were all thine own;
" Memory for thee thy brother's form portray'd;
" It was thy fear the awful warning made:
" Thy former doubts of a religious kind
" Account for all these wanderings of the mind."

" But then, how different when my father came!
" These could not in their nature be the same!"—

" Yes, all are dreams; but some as we awake
" Fly off at once, and no impression make:
" Others are felt, and ere they quit the brain
" Make such impression that they come again;
" As half familiar thoughts, and half unknown,
" And scarcely recollected as our own;
" For half a day abide some vulgar dreams,
" And give our grandams and our nurses themes;
" Others, more strong, abiding figures draw
" Upon the brain, and we assert, 'I saw;'
" And then the fancy on the organs place
" A powerful likeness of a form and face.

" Yet more—in some strong passion's troubled reign,
" Or when the fever'd blood inflames the brain,
" At once the outward and the inward eye
" The real object and the fancied spy;
" The eye is open, and the sense is true,
" And therefore they the outward object view;
" But while the real sense is fix'd on these,
" The power within its own creation sees:
" And these, when mingled in the mind, create
" Those striking visions which our dreamers state:
" For, knowing that is true that met the sight,
" They think the judgment of the fancy right.

" Your frequent talk of dreams has made me turn
" My mind on them, and these the facts I learn.
" Or should you say, 't is not in us to take
" Heed in both ways, to sleep and be awake,
" Perhaps the things by eye and mind survey'd
" Are in their quick alternate efforts made;
" For by this mixture of the truth, the dream
" Will in the morning fresh and vivid seem.

" Dreams are like portraits, and we find they please
" Because they are confess'd resemblances;
" But those strange night-mare visions we compare
" To waxen figures—they too real are,
" Too much a very truth, and are so just
" To life and death, they pain us or disgust.

" Hence from your mind these idle visions shake,
" And, O! my love, to happiness awake!"

" It *was* a warning, tempter! from the dead:
" And wedding thee I should to misery wed!"

" False and injurious! what! unjust to thee?
" O! hear the vows of Love—it cannot be:
" What! I forbear to bless thee—I forego
" That first great blessing of existence? No!
" Did every ghost that terror saw arise
" With such prediction, I should say it lies:
" But none there are—a mighty gulf between
" Hides the ideal world from objects seen;
" We know not where unbodied spirits dwell,
" But this we know, they are invisible;—
" Yet I have one that fain would dwell with thee,
" And always with thy purer spirit be."

" O! leave me, George!"—
" To take the field, and die,
" So leave thee, Lady? Yes, I will comply;
" Thou art too far above me—ghosts withstand
" My hopes in vain, but riches guard thy hand,
" For I am poor—affection and a heart
" To thee devoted, I but these impart;
" Then bid me go, I will thy words obey,
" But let not visions drive thy friend away."

" Hear me, O! hear me! Shall I wed my son?"—
" I am in fondness and obedience one;
" And I will reverence, honour, love, adore,
" Be all that fondest sons can be—and more:
" And shall thy son, if such he be, proceed
" To fierce encounters, and in battle bleed?
" No! thou canst weep!"
" O! leave me, I entreat;
" Leave me a moment—we shall quickly meet."

" No! here I kneel, a beggar, at thy feet."—
He said, and knelt—with accents softer still,
He woo'd the weakness of a failing will
And erring judgment—took her hand and cried,
" Withdraw it not!—O! let it thus abide,
" Pledge of thy love—upon thy act depend
" My joy, my hope,—thus they begin or end!
" Withdraw it not."—He saw her looks express'd
Favour and grace—the hand was firmer press'd;
Signs of opposing fear no more were shown,
And as he press'd, he felt it was his own.

Soon through the house was known the glad assent,
The night so dreaded was in comfort spent;
War was no more, the destined knot was tied,
And the fond widow made a fearful bride.

[Originally:—
Such is our tale, and all that now remain
Are sad varieties of grief and pain.
The day of love, like an autumnal day,
E'en in its morning hasten'd to decay.
Who gave her hand determined not to give,
Was doom'd in anguish and regret to live;

Let mortal frailty judge how mortals frail
Thus in their strongest resolutions fail,
And though we blame, our pity will prevail.

Yet with that Ghost—for she so thought—in view!
When she believed that all he told was true;—
When every threat was to her mind recall'd,
Till it became affrighten'd and appall'd;—
When Reason pleaded, Think! forbear! refrain!—
And when, though trifling, stood that mystic stain,
Predictions, warnings, threats, were present all in vain.

Th' exulting youth a mighty conqueror rose,
And who hereafter shall his will oppose?

Such is our tale: but we must yet attend
Our weak kind widow to her journey's end;
Upon her death-bed laid, confessing to a friend
Her full belief, for to the hour she died
This she profess'd:—
" The truth I must not hide;
" It was my brother's form, and in the night he died:
" In sorrow and in shame has pass'd my time,
" All I have suffer'd follow from my crime:
" I sinn'd with warning—when I *gave* my hand
" A power within said, urgently,—Withstand!
" And I resisted—O! my God, what shame,
" What years of torment, from that frailty came!

" That husband-son!—I will my fault review—
" What did he not that men or monsters do?
" His day of love, a brief autumnal day,
" E'en in its dawning hasten'd to decay;
" Doom'd from our odious union to behold
" How cold he grew, and then how worse than cold;
" Eager he sought me, eagerly to shun,
" Kneeling he woo'd me, but he scorn'd me, won;
" The tears he caused served only to provoke
" His wicked insult o'er the heart he broke;
" My fond compliance served him for a jest,
" And sharpen'd scorn—'I ought to be distress'd;
" 'Why did I not with my chaste ghost comply?'
" And with upbraiding scorn he told me why.
" O! there was grossness in his soul: his mind
" Could not be raised, nor soften'd, nor refined.

" Twice he departed in his rage, and went
" I know not where, nor how his days were spent;
" Twice he return'd a suppliant wretch, and craved,
" Mean as profuse, the trifle I had saved.

" I have had wounds, and some that never heal,
" What bodies suffer, and what spirits feel;
" But he is gone who gave them, he is fled
" To his account! and my revenge is dead:

For he who woo'd so warmly scorn'd her won,
Eager he sought her, eagerly to shun.
He laugh'd at tears he caused himself to start,
And mock'd the sorrows of a breaking heart;
While she a sad and sighing slave remain'd,
And to the dregs the cup of sorrow drain'd.]

"Yet is it duty, though with shame, to give
" My sex a lesson—let my story live;
" For if no ghost the promised visit paid,
" Still was a deep and strong impression made,
" That wisdom had approved, and prudence had obey'd;
" But from another world that warning came,
" And, O! in this be ended all my shame!
" Like the first being of my sex I fell,
" Tempted, and with the tempter doom'd to dwell—
" He was the master-fiend, and where he reign'd was hell."

This was her last, for she described no more
The rankling feelings of a mind so sore,
But died in peace.—One moral let us draw,
Be it a ghost or not the lady saw:—

If our discretion tells us how to live,
We need no ghost a helping hand to give;
But if discretion cannot us restrain,
It then appears a ghost would come in vain.[8]

BOOK XVII.

THE WIDOW.

The Morning Walk—Village Scenery—The Widow's Dwelling—Her Story related—The first Husband—His Indulgence—Its Consequence—Dies—The second—His Authority—Its Effects—His Death—A third Husband—Determinately indulgent—He dies also—The Widow's Retirement.

RICHARD one morning—it was custom now—
Walk'd and conversed with labourers at the plough,
With threshers hastening to their daily task,
With woodmen resting o'er the enlivening flask,
And with the shepherd, watchful of his fold
Beneath the hill, and pacing in the cold:
Farther afield he sometimes would proceed,
And take a path wherever it might lead.

It led him far about to Wickham Green,
Where stood the mansion of the village queen:
Her garden yet its wintry blossoms bore,
And roses graced the windows and the door—
That lasting kind, that through the varying year
Or in the bud or in the bloom appear;
All flowers that now the gloomy days adorn
Rose on the view, and smiled upon that morn:
Richard a damsel at the window spied,
Who kindly drew a useless veil aside,
And show'd a lady who was sitting by,
So pensive, that he almost heard her sigh:
Full many years she could, no question, tell,
But in her mourning look'd extremely well.

" In truth," said Richard, when he told at night
His tale to George, " it was a pleasant sight;
" She looked like one who could, in tender tone,
" Say, ' Will you let a lady sigh alone?
" ' See! Time has touch'd me gently in his race,
" ' And left no odious furrows in my face;
" ' See, too, this house and garden, neat and trim,
" ' Kept for its master—will you stand for him?'

" Say this is vain and foolish if you please,
" But I believe her thoughts resembled these:
" ' Come,' said her looks, ' and we will kindly take
" ' The visit kindness prompted you to make.'
" And I was sorry that so much good play
" Of eye and attitude was thrown away
" On one who has his lot, on one who had his day."

" Your pity, brother," George, with smile, replied,
" You may dismiss, and with it send your pride:
" No need of pity, when the gentle dame
" Has thrice resign'd and re-assumed her name;
" And be not proud—for, though it might be thine,
" She would that hand to humbler men resign.[1]

" Young she is not,—it would be passing strange
" If a young beauty thrice her name should change:

[8] [This tale was suggested to Mr. Crabbe by a Wiltshire friend, in which county the story is almost a popular one.—" It is," say the Edinburgh Reviewers, " a long tale, but not very pleasing. A fair widow had been warned, or supposed she had been warned, by the ghost of a beloved brother, that she would be miserable if she contracted a second marriage—and then, some fifteen years after, she is courted by the son of a reverend priest, to whose house she had retired, and upon whom, during all the years of his childhood, she had lavished the cares of a mother. She long resists his unnatural passion; but is at length subdued by his urgency and youthful beauty, and gives him her hand. There is something rather forbidding, we think, in this fiction; and certainly, the worthy lady could have taken no way so likely to save the ghost's credit as by entering into such a marriage—and she confessed as much, it seems, on her death-bed."]

[1] Here follows in the first draft:—

" Would you believe it, Richard, that fair she
" Has had three husbands? I repeat it, three!

" True, she has years beyond your reckoning seen,
" With distance and a window for their screen.
" But she has something that may still command
" The warm admirer and the ready hand:
" Her fortune, too—yet there indeed I doubt;
" Since so much money has run in and out,
" 'T is hard to guess. But there is this in her,
" That I to minds of stronger cast prefer;
" She may be made, with certainty and ease,
" To take what habits shall a husband please.
" Women will give up all their love of rule,
" Great as it is, if man be not a fool;
" They're out of place when they assume the sway,
" But feel it safe and easy to obey.
" Queens they have been, when men supply the means—
" But Heaven defend us from domestic queens!
" Now hear me, Richard; fairly I relate
" The thrice devoted wife's and widow's fate;
" And you shall own, for I will fairly show,
" That men their misery to supineness owe,
" And that they could not of their fate complain,
" But that they govern with a slacken'd rein."]

"Yes! she has years beyond your reckoning seen—
"Smiles and a window years and wrinkles screen;
"But she, in fact, has that which may command
"The warm admirer and the willing hand.
"What is her fortune we are left to guess,
"But good the sign—she does not much profess;
"Poor she is not,—and there is that in her
"That easy men to strength of mind prefer;
"She may be made, with little care and skill,
"Yielding her own, t' adopt a husband's will.
"Women there are who, if a man will take
"The helm and steer, will no resistance make;
"Who, if neglected, will the power assume,
"And then what wonder if the shipwreck come?

"Queens they will be, if man allow the means,
"And give the power to these domestic queens;
"Whom, if he rightly trains, he may create
"And make obedient members of his state."

Harriet at school was very much the same
As other misses, and so home she came,
Like other ladies, there to live and learn,
To wait her season, and to take her turn.

Their husbands maids as priests their livings gain,
The best, they find, are hardest to obtain;
On those that offer both a while debate—
"I need not take it, it is not so late;
"Better will come if we will longer stay,
"And strive to put ourselves in fortune's way:"
And thus they wait, till many years are past,
For what comes slowly—but it comes at last.

Harriet was wedded,—but it must be said,
The vow'd obedience was not duly paid:
Hers was an easy man,—it gave him pain
To hear a lady murmur and complain:
He was a merchant, whom his father made
Rich in the gains of a successful trade:
A lot more pleasant, or a view more fair,
Has seldom fallen to a youthful pair.

But what is faultless in a world like this?
In every station something seems amiss:
The lady, married, found the house too small—
"Two shabby parlours, and that ugly hall!
"Had we a cottage somewhere, and could meet
"One's friends and favourites in one's snug retreat;
"Or only join a single room to these,
"It would be living something at our ease,
"And have one's self, at home, the comfort that one sees."

Such powers of reason, and of mind such strength,
Fought with man's fear, and they prevail'd at length:
The room was built,—and Harriet did not know
A prettier dwelling, either high or low;
But Harriet loved such conquests, loved to plead
With her reluctant man, and to succeed;
It was such pleasure to prevail o'er one
Who would oppose the thing that still was done,
Who never gain'd the race, but yet would groan and run.

But there were times when love and pity gave
Whatever thoughtless vanity could crave:
She *now* the carriage chose with freshest name,
And was in quite a fever till it came;
But can a carriage be alone enjoy'd?
The pleasure not partaken is destroy'd;
"I must have some good creature to attend
"On morning visits as a kind of friend."

A courteous maiden then was found to sit
Beside the lady, for her purpose fit,
Who had been train'd in all the soothing ways
And servile duties from her early days;
One who had never from her childhood known
A wish fulfill'd, a purpose of her own:
Her part it was to sit beside the dame,
And give relief in every want that came;
To soothe the pride, to watch the varying look,
And bow in silence to the dumb rebuke.

This supple being strove with all her skill
To draw her master's to her lady's will;
For they were like the magnet and the steel,
At times so distant that they could not feel;
Then would she gently move them, till she saw
That to each other they began to draw;
And then would leave them, sure on her return
In Harriet's joy her conquest to discern.

She was a mother now, and grieved to find
The nursery window caught the eastern wind;
What could she do with fears like these oppress'd?
She built a room all window'd to the west;
For sure in one so dull, so bleak, so old,
She and her children must expire with cold:
Meantime the husband murmur'd—"So he might;
"She would be judged by Cousins—Was it right?"

Water was near them, and, her mind afloat,
The lady saw a cottage and a boat,
And thought what sweet excursions they might make,
How they might sail, what neighbours they might take,
And nicely would she deck the lodge upon the lake.

She now prevail'd by habit; had her will,
And found her patient husband sad and still:
Yet this displeased! she gain'd, indeed, the prize,
But not the pleasure of her victories;
Was she a child to be indulged? He knew
She would have right, but would have reason too.

Now came the time when in her husband's face
Care, and concern, and caution she could trace;
His troubled features gloom and sadness bore,
Less he resisted, but he suffer'd more;
His nerves were shook like hers; in him her grief
Had much of sympathy, but no relief.

She could no longer read, and therefore kept
A girl to give her stories while she wept;

Better for Lady Julia's woes to cry,
Than have her own for ever in her eye:
Her husband grieved, and o'er his spirits came
Gloom; and disease attack'd his slender frame;
He felt a loathing for the wretched state
Of his concerns, so sad, so complicate;
Grief and confusion seized him in the day,
And the night pass'd in agony away:
"My ruin comes!" was his awakening thought,
And vainly through the day was comfort sought;
"There, take my all!" he said, and in his dream
Heard the door bolted, and his children scream.
And he was right, for not a day arose
That he exclaim'd not, "Will it never close?"
"Would it were come!"—but still he shifted on,
Till health, and hope, and life's fair views were gone.

Fretful herself, he of his wife in vain
For comfort sought—"He would be well again;
"Time would disorders of such nature heal!
"O! if he felt what she was doom'd to feel;
"Such sleepless nights! such broken rest! her frame
"Rack'd with diseases that she could not name!
"With pangs like hers no other was oppress'd!"
Weeping she said, and sigh'd herself to rest.

The suffering husband look'd the world around,
And saw no friend: on him *misfortune* frown'd;
Him self-reproach tormented; sorely tried,
By threats he mourn'd, and by disease he died.

As weak as wailing infancy or age,
How could the widow with the world engage?
Fortune not now the means of comfort gave,
Yet all her comforts Harriet wept to have.

"My helpless babes," she said, "will nothing know,"
Yet not a single lesson would bestow;
Her debts would overwhelm her, that was sure,
But one privation would she not endure;
"We shall want bread! the thing is past a doubt."
"Then part with Cousins!"—"Can I do without?"
"Dismiss your servants!"—"Spare me them, I pray!"
"At least your carriage!"—"What will people say?"
"That useless boat, that folly on the lake!"—
"Oh! but what cry and scandal will it make!"

It was so hard on her, who not a thing
Had done such mischief on their heads to bring;
This was her comfort, this she would declare,
And then slept soundly on her pillow'd chair.
When not asleep, how restless was the soul,
Above advice, exempted from control:
For ever begging all to be sincere,
And never willing any truth to hear.
A yellow paleness o'er her visage spread,
Her fears augmented as her comforts fled;
Views dark and dismal to her mind appear'd,
And death she sometimes woo'd, and always fear'd.

Among the clerks there was a thoughtful one,
Who still believed that something might be done;
All in his view was not so sunk and lost,
But of a trial things would pay the cost:
He judged the widow, and he saw the way
In which her husband suffer'd her to stray:
He saw entangled and perplex'd affairs,
And Time's sure hand at work on their repairs;
Children he saw, but nothing could he see
Why he might not their careful father be;
And, looking keenly round him, he believed
That what was lost might quickly be retrieved.

Now thought our clerk—"I must not mention love,
"That she at least must seem to disapprove;
"But I must feaf of poverty enforce,
"And then consent will be a thing of course.

"Madam!" said he, "with sorrow I relate
"That our affairs are in a dreadful state;
"I call'd on all our friends, and they declared
"They dared not meddle—not a creature dared;
"But still our perseverance chance may aid,
"And, though I'm puzzled, I am not afraid:
"If you, dear lady, will attention give
"To me, the credit of the house shall live.
"Do not, I pray you, my proposal blame;
"It is my wish to guard your husband's fame,
"And ease your trouble: then your cares resign
"To my discretion—and, in short, be mine."

"Yours! O! my stars!—Your goodness, sir, deserves
"My grateful thanks—take pity on my nerves.
"I shake and tremble at a thing so new,
"And fear 't is what a lady should not do;
"And then to marry upon ruin's brink
"In all this hurry—what will people think?"

"Nay, there's against us neither rule nor law,
"And people's thinking is not worth a straw;
"Those who are prudent have too much to do
"With their own cares to think of me and you;
"And those who are not, are so poor a race,
"That what they utter can be no disgrace:—
"Come! let us now embark, when time and tide
"Invite to sea; in happy hour decide:[2]
"If yet we linger, both are sure to fail,
"The turning waters and the varying gale;
"Trust me, our vessel shall be ably steer'd,
"Nor will I quit her till the rocks are clear'd."

Allured and frighten'd, soften'd and afraid,
The widow doubted, ponder'd, and obey'd:[3]
So were they wedded, and the careful man
His reformation instantly began;
Began his state with vigour to reform,
And made a calm by laughing at the storm.

[2] [Original MS.:—
"But to prevent all babbling, there may be
"A bond and contract betwixt you and me."

[3] [MS.:—
The bond was made, but he appear'd so fond,
So kind and good, that she destroy'd the bond.]

Th' attendant-maiden he dismiss'd—for why?
She might on him and love like his rely;
She needed none to form her children's mind,—
That duty nature to her care assign'd;[4]
In vain she mourn'd, it was her health he prized,
And hence enforced the measures he advised:
She wanted air; and walking, she was told,
Was safe, was pleasant!—he the carriage sold;
He found a tenant who agreed to take
The boat and cottage on the useless lake;
The house itself had now superfluous room,
And a rich lodger was induced to come.

The lady wonder'd at the sudden change,
That yet was pleasant, that was very strange;
When every deed by her desire was done,
She had no day of comfort—no, not one;
When nothing moved or stopp'd at her request,
Her heart had comfort, and her temper rest;
For all was done with kindness,—most polite
Was her new lord, and she confess'd it right;
For now she found that she could gaily live
On what the chance of common life could give:
And her sick mind was cured of every ill,
By finding no compliance with her will;
For when she saw that her desires were vain,
She wisely thought it foolish to complain.

Born for her man, she gave a gentle sigh
To her lost power, and griev'd not to comply;
Within, without, the face of things improved,
And all in order and subjection moved.
As wealth increased, ambition now began
To swell the soul of the aspiring man;
In some few years he thought to purchase land,
And build a seat that hope and fancy plann'd;
To this a name his youthful bride should give!
Harriet, of course, not many years would live;
Then he would farm, and every soil should show
The tree that best upon the place would grow:
He would, moreover, on the Bench debate
On sundry questions—when a magistrate;
Would talk of all that to the state belongs,
The rich man's duties, and the poor man's wrongs;
He would with favourites of the people rank,
And him the weak and the oppress'd should thank.

'T is true those children, orphans then, would need
Help in a world of trouble to succeed;
And they should have it.—He should then possess
All that man needs for earthly happiness.[5]

"Proud words, and vain!" said Doctor Young:
and proud
They are; and vain, were by our clerk allow'd;
For, while he dream'd, there came both pain and cough,
And fever never tamed, and bore him off;
Young as he was, and planning schemes to live
With more delight than man's success can give;
Building a mansion in his fancy, vast
Beyond the Gothic pride of ages past!
While this was plann'd, but ere a place was sought,
The timber season'd, or the quarry wrought,
Came Death's dread summons, and the man was laid
In the poor house the simple sexton made.[6]

But he had time for thought when he was ill,
And made his lady an indulgent will:
'T is said he gave, in parting, his advice,
"It is sufficient to be married twice:"
To which she answer'd, as 't said, again,
"There 's none will have you, if you 're poor and plain;
"And if you 're rich and handsome, there is none
"Will take refusal:—let the point alone."

Be this or true or false, it is her praise
She mourn'd correctly all the mourning days;
But grieve she did not; for the canker grief
Soils the complexion, and is beauty's thief;
Nothing, indeed, so much will discompose
Our public mourning as our private woes;
When tender thoughts a widow's bosom probe,
She thinks not then how graceful sits the robe;
But our nice widow look'd to every fold,
And every eye its beauty might behold!
It was becoming; she composed her face,
She look'd serenely, and she mourn'd with grace.

Some months were pass'd, but yet there wanted three
Of the full time when widows wives may be;
One trying year, and then the mind is freed,
And man may to the vacant throne succeed.

There was a tenant—he, to wit, who hired
That cot and lake that were so much admired;
A man of spirit, one who doubtless meant,
Though he delay'd a while, to pay his rent;
The widow's riches gave her much delight,
And some her claims, and she resolved to write:—

"He knew her grievous loss, how every care
"Devolved on her, who had indeed her share;

[4] [MS.:—
The reading-girl dismiss'd, the books she read
No longer visions caused, or fancies bred;
The teacher gone, the lady took her place,
And found she could instruct the infant race.]

[5] [Original MS.:—
He then would take a farm, and he would keep,
As money'd men are wont, a breed of sheep;
He would attend at meetings and debate,
Would be a serious, useful magistrate.
Talk of his country's rights, and think about the state.
Him should the poor esteem, his equals thank,
And he would class with men of certain rank,
Join in some firm, a partner in some bank—
He and his partner—Ronaldson and Co.,—
All this ambition saw—it must be so.
Perhaps these children would require a lift;
It was not right to turn them quite adrift:
Of that hereafter—and he thought beside
About the face and fortune of his bride;
Thus, while he dream'd, &c.]

[6] [MS.:—
Young as he was, and planning favourite schemes
For future grandeur, wealth's delirious dreams!
He built a mansion in his mind, and one
The country round should gaze with pride upon;
But ere a stone was laid, or timber sawn,
He to the narrow house of death was drawn.]

" She had no doubt of him,—but was as sure
" As that she breathed her money was secure;
" But she had made a rash and idle vow
" To claim her dues, and she must keep it now:
" So if it suited——"
And for this there came
A civil answer to the gentle dame:
Within the letter were excuses, thanks,
And clean bank paper from the best of banks;
There were condolence, consolation, praise,
With some slight hints of danger in delays;
With these good things were others from the lake,
Perch that were wish'd to salmon for her sake,
And compliment as sweet as new-born hope could
make.

This led to friendly visits, social calls,
And much discourse of races, rambles, balls;
But all in proper bounds, and not a word
Before its time—the man was not absurd,
Nor was he cold; but when she might expect,
A letter came, and one to this effect:—

" That if his eyes had not his love convey'd,
" They had their master shamefully betray'd;
" But she must know the flame, that he was sure,
" Nor she could doubt, would long as life endure:
" Both were in widow'd state, and both possess'd
" Of ample means to make their union bless'd;
" That she had been confined, he knew for truth,
" And begg'd her to have pity on her youth;
" Youth, he would say, and he desired his wife
" To have the comforts of an easy life:
" She loved a carriage, loved a decent seat
" To which they might at certain times retreat;
" Servants indeed were sorrows,—yet a few
" They still must add, and do as others do:
" She too would some attendant damsel need,
" To hear, to speak, to travel, or to read:"
In short, the man his remedies assign'd
For his foreknown diseases in the mind:—
" First," he presumed, " that in a nervous case
" Nothing was better than a change of place:"
He added, too,—" 'T was well that he could prove
" That his was pure, disinterested love;
" Not as when lawyers couple house and land
" In such a way as none can understand;
" No! thanks to Him that every good supplied,
" He had enough, and wanted nought beside:
" Merit was all."—
" Well! now, she would protest,
" This was a letter prettily express'd."
To every female friend away she flew
To ask advice, and say, " What shall I do?"
She kiss'd her children,—and she said, with tears,
" I wonder what is best for you, my dears?

* * * *

" How can I, darlings, to your good attend
" Without the help of some experienced friend,
" Who will protect us all, or, injured, will defend?"

The Widow then ask'd counsel of her heart—
In vain, for that had nothing to impart;
But yet with that, or something for her guide,
She to her swain thus guardedly replied:—

" She must believe he was sincere, for why
" Should one who needed nothing deign to lie?
" But though she could and did his truth admit,
" She could not praise him for his taste a bit;
" And yet men's tastes were various, she confess'd,
" And none could prove his own to be the best.
" It was a vast concern, including all
" That we can happiness or comfort call;
" And yet she found that those who waited long
" Before their choice, had often chosen wrong;
" Nothing, indeed, could for her loss atone,
" But 't was the greater that she lived alone;
" She, too, had means, and therefore what the use
" Of more, that still more trouble would produce?
" And pleasure too she own'd, as well as care,
" Of which, at present, she had not her share.[7]

" The things he offer'd, she must needs confess,
" They were all women's wishes, more or less,
" But were expensive; though a man of sense
" Would by his prudence lighten the expense:
" Prudent he was, but made a sad mistake
" When he proposed her faded face to take;
" And yet, 't is said, there 's beauty that will last
" When the rose withers and the bloom be past.

" One thing displeased her,—that he could suppose
" He might so soon his purposes disclose;
" Yet had she hints of such intent before,
" And would excuse him if he wrote no more:
" What would the world?—and yet she judged them fools
" Who let the world's suggestions be their rules:
" What would her friends?—yet in her own affairs
" It was her business to decide, not theirs:
" Adieu! then, sir," she added; " thus you find
" The changeless purpose of a steady mind,
" In one now left alone, but to her fate resign'd."

The marriage follow'd; and th' experienced dame
Consider'd what the conduct that became
A thrice-devoted lady. She confess'd
That when indulged she was but more distress'd;

7 [Thus in the original MS.:—
" It was a vast concern, and, when to think
" She forced herself, she could not sleep a wink.
" ' Nothing,' she wrote, ' could for her loss atone:
" ' It was a wretched life to live alone;
" ' Yet to be used unkindly, that was worse
" ' Than any evil, but an empty purse;
" ' And as her own was not so poor a kind,
" ' What, in a change, could she expect to find?
" ' Not but a double fortune would produce
" ' A double pleasure—she confess'd the use.
" ' Yet at her time of life, what she desired
" ' Were humble comforts—little she required.
" ' And yet 't was true as any truth could be,
" ' None had less pleasure in the world than she.
" ' And then her children! he must surely know
" ' What prudent mothers to their offspring owe;
" ' Not but a parent may restrain a child,
" ' Nay, may reject him, if he will be wild,
" ' But hers were good, and so they would remain;
" ' If not, alas! who should their wills restrain?' "]

And by her second husband when controll'd,
Her life was pleasant, though her love was cold;
"Then let me yield," she said, and with a sigh,
"Let me to wrong submit, with right comply."
Alas! obedience may mistake, and they
Who reason not will err when they obey;
And fated was the gentle dame to find
Her duty wrong, and her obedience blind.

The man was kind, but would have no dispute;
His love and kindness both were absolute:
She needed not her wishes to express
To one who urged her on to happiness;
For this he took her to the lakes and seas;
To mines and mountains, nor allow'd her ease,
She must be pleased, he said, and he must live to please.

He hurried north and south, and east and west;
When age required, they would have time to rest:
He in the richest dress her form array'd,
And cared not what he promised, what he paid;
She should share all his pleasures as her own,
And see whatever could be sought or shown.

This run of pleasure for a time she bore,
And then affirm'd that she could taste no more:
She loved it while its nature it retain'd,
But, made a duty, it displeased and pain'd:
"Have we not means?" the joyous husband cried;
"But I am wearied out," the wife replied:
"Wearied with pleasure! Thing till now unheard!—
"Are all that sweeten trouble to be fear'd?
"'T is but the sameness tires you,—cross the seas,
"And let us taste the world's varieties.

"'T is said, in Paris that a man may live
"In all the luxuries a world can give,
"And in a space confined to narrow bound
"All the enjoyments of our life are found;
"There we may eat and drink, may dance and dress,
"And in its very essence joy possess;
"May see a moving crowd of lovely dames,
"May win a fortune at your favourite games;
"May hear the sounds that ravish human sense,
"And all without receding foot from thence."

The conquer'd wife, resistless and afraid,
To the strong call a sad obedience paid.

As we an infant in its pain, with sweets
Loved once, now loath'd, torment him till he eats,
Who on the authors of his new distress
Looks trembling with disgusted weariness,
So Harriet felt, so look'd, and seem'd to say,
"O! for a day of rest, a holiday!"

At length, her courage rising with her fear,
She said, "Our pleasures may be bought too dear!"

To this he answer'd—"Dearest! from thy heart
"Bid every fear of evil times depart;
"I ever trusted in the trying hour
"To my good stars, and felt the ruling power;
"When want drew nigh, his threat'ning speed was stopp'd,
"Some virgin aunt, some childless uncle dropp'd;
"In all his threats I sought expedients new,
"And my last, best resource was found in you."[8]

Silent and sad the wife beheld her doom,
And sat her down to see the ruin come;
And meet the ills that rise where money fails,
Debts, threats, and duns, bills, bailiffs, writs, and jails.

These was she spared: ere yet by want oppress'd,
Came one more fierce that bailiff in arrest;
Amid a scene where Pleasure never came,
Though never ceased the mention of his name,
The husband's heated blood received the breath
Of strong disease, that bore him to his death.

Her all collected,—whether great or small
The sum, I know not, but collected all,—
The widow'd lady to her cot retired,
And there she lives delighted and admired:
Civil to all, compliant and polite,
Disposed to think "whatever is, is right:"
She wears the widow's weeds, she gives the widow's mite.
At home a while, she in the autumn finds
The sea an object for reflecting minds,
And change for tender spirits; there she reads,
And weeps in comfort in her graceful weeds.[9]

What gives our tale its moral? Here we find
That wives like this are not for rule design'd,
Nor yet for blind submission; happy they,
Who, while they feel it pleasant to obey,
Have yet a kind companion at their side
Who in their journey will his power divide,
Or yield the reins, and bid the lady guide;

[8] [In the original MS.:—

"Oh!" she cried, "stop, our means will never last;"
For she had sad remembrance of the past.

"Hence with all care!" the husband cried, "away!
"Him have I shunn'd and hated day by day;
"Never would I his saucy frown allow,
"And shall I turn and meet the villain now?
"In all my wants, I found expedients new,
"And my last, best resource, my dear, in you."]

[9] [Here follows in the original MS.:—

These graceful weeds will soon be laid aside;
Exchanged for all the glories of a bride.

There all is chance! for she is form'd to take
The guiding hand, but not a guide to make.

As men of skill the ductile clay command
And warm and soften for the plastic hand,
Till, in each well-form'd feature of the face
He can the work of his creation trace,
So may the future husband here survey
The mind he models—if he wills he may.

Women, dear Richard, born to be controll'd,
Yet love the ensign of the power to hold,
And would the power itself—but, this deny,
And they with meek, well-order'd minds comply;
Tyrants, no doubt, if you resign the sway—
If you retain it, willing to obey.]

Then points the wonders of the way, and makes
The duty pleasant that she undertakes;
He shows her objects as they move along,
And gently rules the movements that are wrong;
He tells her all the skilful driver's art,
And smiles to see how well she acts her part;
Nor praise denies to courage or to skill,
In using power that he resumes at will.[10]

BOOK XVIII.

ELLEN.

A Morning Ride—A Purchase of the Squire—The Way to it described—The former Proprietor—Richard's Return—Inquiries respecting a Lady whom he had seen—Her History related—Her Attachment to a Tutor—They are parted—Impediments removed—How removed in vain—Fate of the Lover—Of Ellen.

Bleak was the morn—said Richard, with a sigh,
"I must depart!"—"That, Brother, I deny,"
Said George: "You may; but I perceive not why."

This point before had been discuss'd, but still
The guest submitted to the ruling will;
But every day gave rise to doubt and fear,—
He heard not now, as he was wont to hear,
That all was well!—though little was express'd,
It seem'd to him the writer was distress'd;
Restrain'd! there was attempt and strife to please,
Pains and endeavour—not Matilda's ease—
Not the pure lines of love—the guileless friend
In all her freedom!—What could this portend?
"Fancy!" said George, "the self-tormentor's pain:"—
And Richard still consented to remain.

"Ride you this fair cool morning?" said the Squire:
"Do—for a purchase I have made inquire,
"And with you take a will complacently t' admire:
"Southward at first, dear Richard, make your way,
"Cross Hilton Bridge, move on through Breken Clay;
"At Dunham Wood turn duly to the east,
"And there your eyes upon the ocean feast;
"Then ride above the cliff, or ride below,
"You 'll be enraptured, for your taste I know;
"It is a prospect that a man might stay
"To his bride hastening on his wedding-day;
"At Filburn Sluice once more ascend, and view
"A decent house; an ample garden too,
"And planted well behind—a lively scene, and new;
"A little taste, a little pomp display'd
"By a dull man, who had retired from trade
"To enjoy his leisure—Here he came prepared
"To farm, nor cost in preparation spared;
"But many works he purchased, some he read,
"And often rose with projects in his head
"Of crops in courses raised, of herds by matching bred.
"We had just found these little humours out,
"Just saw—he saw not—what he was about;
"Just met as neighbours, still disposed to meet,
"Just learn'd the current tales of Dowling Street,
"And were just thinking of our female friends,
"Saying—'You know not what the man intends,
"'A rich, kind, hearty'—and it might be true
"Something he wish'd, but had not time to do;
"A cold ere yet the falling leaf—of small
"Effect till then—was fatal in the fall;
"And of that house was his possession brief:—
"Go; and guard well against the falling leaf.

"But hear me, Richard, looking to my ease,
"Try if you can find something that will please;
"Faults if you see, and such as must abide,
"Say they are small, or say that I can hide;
"But faults that I can change, remove, or mend,
"These like a foe detect—or like a friend.

"Mark well the rooms, and their proportions learn,
"In each some use, some elegance discern;
"Observe the garden, its productive wall,
"And find a something to commend in all;
"Then, should you praise them in a knowing way,
"I 'll take it kindly—that is well—be gay.
"Nor pass the pebbled cottage as you rise
"Above the sluice, till you have fix'd your eyes
"On the low woodbined window, and have seen,
"So fortune favour you, the ghost within;
"Take but one look, and then your way pursue,
"It flies all strangers, and it knows not you."

Richard return'd, and by his Brother stood,
Not in a pensive, not in pleasant mood;
But by strong feeling into stillness wrought,
As nothing thinking, or with too much thought;
Or like a man who means indeed to speak,
But would his hearer should his purpose seek.

When George—"What is it, Brother, you would hide?
"Or what confess?"—"Who is she?" he replied;
"That angel whom I saw, to whom is she allied?
"Of this fair being let me understand,
"And I will praise your purchase, house and land.

"Hers was that cottage on the rising ground,
"West of the waves, and just beyond their sound;
"'T is larger than the rest, and whence, indeed,
"You might expect a lady to proceed;
"But O! this creature, far as I could trace,
"Will soon be carried to another place.
"'Fair, fragile thing!' I said, when first my eye
"Caught hers, 'wilt thou expand thy wings and fly?

[10] ["The Widow, with her three husbands, is not quite so lively as the Wife of Bath with her five; but it is a very amusing as well as a very instructive legend, and exhibits a rich variety of those striking intellectual portraits which mark the hand of our poetical Rembrandt. The serene close of her eventful life is highly exemplary."—Jeffrey.]

" ' Or wilt thou vanish? Beauteous spirit, stay!'—
" For will it not (I question'd) melt away?
" No! it was mortal—I unseen was near,
" And saw the bosom's sigh, the standing tear!
" She thought profoundly, for I stay'd to look,
" And first she read, then laid aside her book;
" Then on her hand reclined her lovely head,
" And seem'd unconscious of the tear she shed.

" ' Art thou so much,' I said, ' to grief a prey?'
" Till pity pain'd me, and I rode away.

" Tell me, my Brother, is that sorrow dread
" For the great change that bears her to the dead?
" Has she connections? Does she love?—I feel
" Pity and grief,—wilt thou her woes reveal?"

" They are not lasting, Richard, they are woes
" Chastised and meek! she sings them to repose;
" If not, she reasons; if they still remain,
" She finds resource, that none shall find in vain.

" Whether disease first grew upon regret,
" Or nature gave it, is uncertain yet,
" And must remain; the frame was slightly made,
" That grief assail'd, and all is now decay'd!

" But though so willing from the world to part,
" I must not call her case a broken heart;
" Nor dare I take upon me to maintain
" That hearts once broken never heal again."

She was an only daughter, one whose sire
Loved not that girls to knowledge should aspire;
But he had sons, and Ellen quickly caught
Whatever they were by their masters taught;
This when the father saw—" It is the turn
" Of her strange mind," said he; " but let her learn;
" 'T is almost pity with that shape and face—
" But is a fashion, and brings no disgrace;
" Women of old wrote verse, or for the stage
" Brought forth their works! they now are reasoners sage,
" And with severe pursuits dare grapple and engage:
" If such her mind, I shall in vain oppose;
" If not, her labours of themselves will close."

Ellen, 't was found, had skill without pretence,
And silenced envy by her meek good sense;
That Ellen learnt, her various knowledge proved;
Soft words and tender looks, that Ellen loved;
For he who taught her brothers found in her
A constant, ready, eager auditor;
This he perceived, nor could his joy disguise,
It tuned his voice, it sparkled in his eyes.

Not very young nor very handsome he,
But very fit an Abelard to be;
His manner and his meekness hush'd alarm
In all but Ellen—Ellen felt the charm;
Hers was fond " filial love," she found delight
To have her mind's dear father in her sight;
But soon the borrow'd notion she resign'd—
He was no father, even to the mind.

But Ellen had her comforts—" He will speak,"
She said, " for he beholds me fond and weak:
" Fond, and he therefore may securely plead,—
" Weak, I have therefore of his firmness need;
" With whom my father will his Ellen trust,
" Because he knows him to be kind and just."

" Alas! too well the conscious lover knew
The parent's mind, and well the daughter's too;
He felt of duty the imperious call,
Beheld his danger, and must fly or fall.
What would the parent, what his pupils think?
Oh! he was standing on perdition's brink:
In his dilemma flight alone remain'd,
And could he fly whose very soul was chain'd?
He knew she lov'd; she tried not to conceal
A hope she thought that virtue's self might feel.

Ever of her and her frank heart afraid,
Doubting himself, he sought in absence aid,
And had resolved on flight, but still the act delay'd;
At last so high his apprehension rose,
That he would both his love and labour close.

" While undisclosed my fear each instant grows,
" And I lament the guilt that no one knows;
" Success undoes me, and the view that cheers
" All other men, all dark to me appears!"

Thus as he thought, his Ellen at his side
Her soothing softness to his grief applied;
With like effect as water cast on flame,
For he more heated and confused became,
And broke in sorrow from the wondering maid,
Who was at once offended and afraid;
Yet " Do not go!" she cried, and was awhile obey'd.

" Art thou then ill, dear friend?" she ask'd, and took
His passive hand—" How very pale thy look!
" And thou art cold, and tremblest—pray thee tell
" Thy friend, thy Ellen, is her master well?
" And let her with her loving care attend
" To all that vexes and disturbs her friend."

" Nay, my dear lady! we have all our cares,
" And I am troubled with my poor affairs:
" Thou canst not aid me, Ellen; could it be
" And might it, doubtless I would fly to thee;
" But we have sundry duties, and must all,
" Hard as it may be, go where duties call.
" Suppose the trial were this instant thine,
" Couldst thou the happiest of thy views resign
" At duty's strong command?"—" If thou wert by,"
Said the unconscious maiden, " I would try!"—
And as she sigh'd she heard the soft responsive sigh.

And then assuming steadiness, " Adieu!"
He cried, and from the grieving Ellen flew;
And to her father with a bleeding heart
He went, his grief and purpose to impart;
Told of his health, and did in part confess
That he should love the noble maiden less.

The parent's pride to sudden rage gave way—
" And the girl loves! that plainly you would say;
" And you with honour, in your pride, retire!—
" Sir, I your prudence envy and admire."

But here the father saw the rising frown,
And quickly let his lofty spirit down.

" Forgive a parent!—I may well excuse
" A girl who could perceive such worth and choose
" To make it hers: we must not look to meet
" All we might wish;—is age itself discreet?
" Where conquest may not be, 't is prudence to retreat."

Then, with the kindness worldly minds assume,
He praised the self-pronounced and rigorous doom;
He wonder'd not that one so young should love,
And much he wish'd he could the choice approve;
Much he lamented such a mind to lose,
And begg'd to learn if he could aid his views,
If such were form'd—then closed the short account,
And to a shilling paid the full amount.

So Cecil left the mansion, and so flew
To foreign shores, without an interview:
He must not say, I love—he could not say, Adieu!

Long was he absent; as a guide to youth,
With grief contending, and in search of truth,
In courting peace, and trying to forget
What was so deeply interesting yet.

A friend in England gave him all the news,
A sad indulgence that he would not lose:
He told how Ellen suffer'd, how they sent
The maid from home in sullen discontent,
With some relation on the Lakes to live,
In all the sorrow such retirements give;
And there she roved among the rocks, and took
Moss from the stone, and pebbles from the brook;
Gazed on the flies that settled on the flowers,
And so consumed her melancholy hours.

Again he wrote.—The father then was dead,
And Ellen to her native village fled,
With native feeling—there she oped her door,
Her heart, her purse, and comforted the poor,
The sick, the sad,—and there she pass'd her days,
Deserving much, but never seeking praise,
Her task to guide herself, her joy the fall'n to raise.
Nor would she nicely faults and merits weigh,
But loved the impulse of her soul t' obey:
The prayers of all she heard, their sufferings view'd,
Nor turn'd from any save when love pursued;
For though to love disposed, to kindness prone,
She thought of Cecil, and she lived alone.

Thus heard the lover of the life she pass'd
Till his return,—and he return'd at last;
For he had saved, and was a richer man
Than when to teach and study he began;
Something his father left, and he could fly
To the loved country where he wish'd to die.

" And now," he said, " this maid with gentle mind
" May I not hope to meet, as good, as kind,
" As in the days when first her friend she knew
" And then could trust—and he indeed is true?
" She knew my motives, and she must approve
" The man who dared to sacrifice his love
" And fondest hopes to virtue: virtuous she,
" Nor can resent that sacrifice in me."

He reason'd thus, but fear'd, and sought the friend
In his own country, where his doubts must end:
They then together to her dwelling came,
And by a servant sent her lover's name,
A modest youth, whom she before had known,
His favourite then, and doubtless *then* her own.

They in the carriage heard the servants speak
At Ellen's door—" A maid so heavenly meek,
" Who would all pain extinguish! Yet will she
" Pronounce my doom, I feel the certainty!"
" Courage!" the friend exclaim'd; " the lover's fear
" Grows without ground:" but Cecil would not hear;
He seem'd some dreadful object to explore,
And fix'd his fearful eye upon the door,
Intensely longing for reply—the thing
That must to him his future fortune bring;
And now it brought! like Death's cold hand it came—
" The lady was a stranger to the name!"
Backward the lover in the carriage fell,
Weak, but not fainting—" All," said he, " is well!
" Return with me—I have no more to seek!"
And this was all the woful man would speak.

Quickly he settled all his worldly views,
And sail'd from home, his fiercer pains to lose
And nurse the milder—now with labour less
He might his solitary world possess,
And taste the bitter-sweet of love in idleness.

Greece was the land he chose; a mind decay'd
And ruin'd there through glorious ruin stray'd,
There read, and walk'd, and mused,—there loved, and wept, and pray'd.
Nor would he write, nor suffer hope to live,
But gave to study all his mind could give;
Till, with the dead conversing, he began
To lose the habits of a living man,
Save that he saw some wretched, them he tried
To soothe,—some doubtful, them he strove to guide;
Nor did he lose the mind's ennobling joy
Of that new state that death must not destroy;
What time had done we know not,—Death was nigh,
To his first hopes the lover gave a sigh,
But hopes more new and strong confirm'd his wish to die.

Meantime poor Ellen in her cottage thought
" That he would seek her—sure she should be sought:
" She did not mean—it was an evil hour,
" Her thoughts were guardless, and beyond her power;

" And for one speech, and that in rashness made!
" Have I no friend to soothe him and persuade?
" He must not leave me—he again will come,
" And we shall have one hope, one heart, one home!"

But when she heard that he on foreign ground
Sought his lost peace, hers never more was found;
But still she felt a varying hope that love
Would all these slight impediments remove.—
" Has he no friend to tell him that our pride
" Resents a moment and is satisfied?
" Soon as the hasty sacrifice is made,
" A look will soothe us, and a tear persuade;
" Have I no friend to say 'Return again,
" 'Reveal your wishes, and relieve her pain?' "

With suffering mind the maid her prospects view'd,
That hourly varied with the varying mood;
As pass'd the day, the week, the month, the year,
The faint hope sicken'd, and gave place to fear.

No Cecil came!—" Come, peevish and unjust!"
Sad Ellen cried, " why cherish this disgust?
" Thy Ellen's voice could charm thee once, but thou
" Canst nothing see or hear of Ellen now!"

Yes! she was right; the grave on him was closed,
And there the lover and the friend reposed.
The news soon reach'd her, and she then replied
In his own manner—" I am satisfied!"

To her a lover's legacy is paid,
The darling wealth of the devoted maid;
From this her best and favourite books she buys,
From this are doled the favourite charities;
And when a tale or face affects her heart,
This is the fund that must relief impart.

Such have the ten last years of Ellen been!
Her very last that sunken eye has seen!
That half angelic being still must fade
Till all the angel in the mind be made;
And now the closing scene will shortly come—
She cannot visit sorrow at her home;
But still she feeds the hungry, still prepares
The usual softeners of the peasant's cares:
And though she prays not with the dying now,
She teaches them to die, and shows them how.

" Such is my tale, dear Richard, but, that told,
" I must all comments on the text withhold;
" What is the sin of grief I cannot tell,
" Nor of the sinners who have loved too well;
" But to the cause of mercy I incline,
" Or, O! my Brother, what a fate is mine!"[1]

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1 [" This little story is, we think, one of the most simple, graceful, and pathetic of all Mr. Crabbe's compositions."—WILSON.]

BOOK XIX.

WILLIAM BAILEY.

Discourse on Jealousy—Of unsuspicious Men—Visit William and his Wife—His Dwelling—Story of William and Fanny—Character of both—Their Contract—Fanny's Visit to an Aunt—Its Consequences—Her Father's Expectation—His Death—William a Wanderer—His Mode of Living—The Acquaintance he forms—Travels across the Kingdom—Whom he finds—The Event of their Meeting.

THE letters Richard in a morning read
To quiet and domestic comforts led;
And George, who thought the world could not supply
Comfort so pure, reflected with a sigh;
Then would pursue the subject, half in play,
Half earnest, till the sadness wore away.

They spoke of Passion's errors, Love's disease,
His pains, afflictions, wrongs, and jealousies;
Of Herod's vile commandment—that his wife
Should live no more, when he no more had life;
He could not bear that royal Herod's spouse
Should, as a widow, make her second vows;
Or that a mortal with his queen should wed,
Or be the rival of the mighty dead.

" Herods," said Richard, " doubtless may be found,
" But haply do not in the world abound;
" Ladies, indeed, a dreadful lot would have,
" If jealousy could act beyond the grave:
" No doubt Othellos every place supply,
" Though every Desdemona does not die;
" But there are lovers in the world who live
" Slaves to the sex, and every fault forgive."

" I know," said George, " a happy man and kind,
" Who finds his wife is all he wish'd to find,—
" A mild, good man, who, if he nothing sees,
" Will suffer nothing to disturb his ease;
" Who, ever yielding both to smiles and sighs,
" Admits no story that a wife denies,—
" She guides his mind, and she directs his eyes.

" Richard, there dwells within a mile a pair
" Of good examples,—I will guide you there:
" Such man is William Bailey,—but his spouse
" Is virtue's self since she had made her vows.
" I speak of ancient stories, long worn out,
" That honest William would not talk about;
" But he will sometimes check her starting tear,
" And call her self-correction too severe.—
" In their own inn the gentle pair are placed,
" Where you behold the marks of William's taste:
" They dwell in plenty, in respect, and peace,
" Landlord and lady of the Golden Fleece:
" Public indeed their calling, but there come
" No brawl, no revel to that decent room;
" All there is still, and comely to behold,
" Mild as the fleece, and pleasant as the gold;
" But, mild and pleasant as they now appear,
" They first experienced many a troubled year;

"And that, if known, might not command our praise
"Like the smooth tenor of their present days.

"Our hostess, now so grave and steady grown,
"Has had some awkward trials of her own:
"She was not always so resign'd and meek,—
"Yet can I little of her failings speak;
"Those she herself will her misfortunes deem,
"And slides discreetly from the dubious theme;
"But you shall hear the tale that I will tell,
"When we have seen the mansion where they dwell."

They saw the mansion,—and the couple made
Obeisance due, and not without parade:
"His honour, still obliging, took delight
"To make them pleasant in each other's sight;
"It was their duty—they were very sure
"It was their pleasure."
This they could endure,
Nor turn'd impatient. In the room around
Were care and neatness: instruments were found
For sacred music, books with prints and notes
By learned men and good, whom William quotes
In mode familiar—Beveridge, Doddridge, Hall,
Pyle, Whitby, Hammond—he refers to all.

Next they beheld his garden, fruitful, nice,
And, as he said, his little paradise.

In man and wife appear'd some signs of pride,
Which they perceived not, or they would not hide—
"Their honest saving, their good name, their skill,
"His honour's land, which they had grace to till;
"And more his favour shown, with all their friends' good will."

This past, the visit was with kindness closed,
And George was ask'd to do as he proposed.

"Richard," said he, "though I myself explore
"With no distaste the annals of the poor,
"And may with safety to a brother show
"What of my humble friends I chance to know,
"Richard, there are who call the subjects low.

"The host and hostess of the Fleece—'t is base—
"Would I could cast some glory round the place!

"The lively heroine once adorn'd a farm,—
"And William's virtue has a kind of charm:
"Nor shall we, in our apprehension, need
"Riches or rank——I think I may proceed:
"Virtue and worth there are who will not see
"In humble dress, but low they cannot be."

The youth's addresses pleased his favourite maid,—
They wish'd for union, but were both afraid;
They saw the wedded poor,—and fear the bliss delay'd:
Yet they appear'd a happier lass and swain
Than those who will not reason or refrain.

William was honest, simple, gentle, kind,
Laborious, studious, and to thrift inclined;
More neat than youthful peasant in his dress,
And yet so careful that it cost him less:
He kept from inns, though doom'd an inn to keep,
And all his pleasures and pursuits were cheap:
Yet would the youth perform a generous deed,
When reason saw or pity felt the need;
He of his labour and his skill would lend,
Nay, of his money, to a suffering friend.

William had manual arts,—his room was graced
With carving quaint, that spoke the master's taste;
But if that taste admitted some dispute,
He charm'd the nymphs with flageolet and flute.

Constant at church, and there a little proud,
He sang with boldness, and he read aloud;
Self-taught to write, he his example took,
And form'd his letters from a printed book.

I 've heard of ladies who profess'd to see
In a man's writing what his mind must be;
As Doctor Spurzheim's pupils, when they look
Upon a skull, will read it as a book—
Our talents, tendencies, and likings trace,
And find for all the measure and the place:
Strange times! when thus we are completely read
By man or woman, by the hand or head!
Believe who can—but William's even mind
All who beheld might in his writing find;
His not the scratches where we try in vain
Meaning and words to construe or explain.

But with our village hero to proceed,—
He read as learned clerks are wont to read;
Solemn he was in tone, and slow in pace,
By nature gifted both with strength and grace.

Black parted locks his polish'd forehead press'd;
His placid looks an easy mind confess'd:
His smile content, and seldom more, convey'd;
Not like the smile of fair illusive maid,
When what she feels is hid, and what she wills betray'd.

The lighter damsels call'd his manner prim,
And laugh'd at virtue so array'd in him;
But they were wanton, as he well replied,
And hoped their own would not be strongly tried:
Yet was he full of glee, and had his strokes
Of rustic wit, his repartees, and jokes;
Nor was averse, ere yet he pledged his love,
To stray with damsels in the shady grove;
When he would tell them, as they walk'd along,
How the birds sang, and imitate their song:
In fact, our rustic had his proper taste,
Was with peculiar arts and manners graced—
And Absalom had been, had Absalom been chaste.

Frances, like William, felt her heart incline
To neat attire—but Frances would be fine:
Though small the farm, the farmer's daughter knew
Her rank in life, and she would have it too.

This, and this only, gave the lover pain,
He thought it needless, and he judged it vain:
Advice in hints he to the fault applied,
And talk'd of sin, of vanity, and pride.

"And what is proud," said Frances, "but to stand
"Singing at church, and sawing thus your hand?
"Looking at heaven above, as if to bring
"The holy angels down to hear you sing?
"And when you write, you try with all your skill,
"And cry, no wonder that you wrote so ill!
"For you were ever to yourself a rule,
"And humbly add, you never were at school.
"Is that not proud?—And I have heard beside,
"The proudest creatures have the humblest pride.
"If you had read the volumes I have hired,
"You 'd see your fault, nor try to be admired;
"For they who read such books can always tell
"The fault within, and read the mind as well."

William had heard of hiring books before;
He knew she read, and he inquired no more;
On him the subject was completely lost,
What he regarded was the time and cost;
Yet that was trifling—just a present whim,
"Novels and stories! what were they to him?"

With such slight quarrels, or with those as slight,
They lived in love, and dream'd of its delight.
Her duties Fanny knew, both great and small,
And she with diligence observed them all;
If e'er she fail'd a duty to fulfil,
'T was childish error, not rebellious will;
For her much reading, though it touch'd her heart,
Could neither vice nor indolence impart.

Yet, when from William and her friends retired,
She found her reading had her mind inspired
With hopes and thoughts of high mysterious things,
Such as the early dream of kindness brings;
And then she wept, and wonder'd as she read,
And new emotions in her heart were bred:
She sometimes fancied that when love was true
'T was more than she and William ever knew;
More than the shady lane in summer-eve,
More than the sighing when he took his leave;
More than his preference when the lads advance
And choose their partners for the evening dance;
Nay, more than midnight thoughts and morning dreams,
Or talk when love and marriage are the themes;
In fact, a something not to be defined,
Of all subduing, all commanding kind,
That fills the fondest heart, that rules the proudest mind.

But on her lover Fanny still relied,
Her best companion, her sincerest guide,
On whom she could rely, in whom she would confide.

All jealous fits were past; in either now
Were tender wishes for the binding vow:
There was no secret one alone possess'd,
There was no hope that warm'd a single breast;
Both felt the same concerns their thoughts employ,
And neither knew one solitary joy.

Then why so easy, William? why consent
To wait so long? thou wilt at last repent;
"Within a month," do Care and Prudence say,
If all be ready, linger not a day;
Ere yet the choice be made, on choice debate,
But, having chosen, dally not with fate.

While yet to wait the pair were half content,
And half disposed their purpose to repent,
A spinster-aunt, in some great baron's place,
Would see a damsel, pride of all her race;
And Fanny, flatter'd by the matron's call,
Obey'd her aunt, and long'd to see the Hall;
For halls and castles in her fancy wrought,
And she accounts of love and wonder sought;
There she expected strange events to learn,
And take in tender secrets fond concern;
There she expected lovely nymphs to view,
Perhaps to hear and meet their lovers too;
The Julias, tender souls! the Henrys kind and true!
There she expected plottings to detect,
And—but I know not what she might expect—
All she was taught in books to be her guide,
And all that nature taught the nymph beside.

Now that good dame had in the castle dwelt
So long that she for all its people felt;
She kept her sundry keys, and ruled o'er all,
Female and male, domestics in the hall;
By her lord trusted, worthy of her trust,
Proud but obedient, bountiful but just.

She praised her lucky stars, that in her place
She never found neglect, nor felt disgrace:
To do her duty was her soul's delight,
This her inferiors would to theirs excite,
This her superiors notice and requite;
To either class she gave the praises due,
And still more grateful as more favour'd grew.
Her lord and lady were of peerless worth,
In power unmatch'd, in glory, and in birth;
And such the virtue of the noble race,
It reach'd the meanest servant in the place;
All, from the chief attendant on my lord
To the groom's helper, had her civil word;
From Miss Montregor, who the ladies taught,
To the rude lad who in the garden wrought;
From the first favourite to the meanest drudge,
Were no such women, Heaven should be her judge;
Whatever stains were theirs, let them reside
In that pure place, and they were mundified;
The sun of favour on their vileness shone,
And all their faults like morning mists were gone.

There was Lord Robert! could she have her choice,
From the world's masters he should have her voice;
So kind and gracious in his noble ways,
It was a pleasure speaking in his praise;
And Lady Catherine,—O! a prince's pride
Might by one smile of hers be gratified;

With her would monarchs all their glory share,
And in her presence banish all their care.

Such was the matron, and to her the maid
Was by her lover carefully convey'd.

When William first the invitation read
It some displeasure in his spirit bred;
Not that one jealous thought the man possess'd,
He was by fondness, not by fear distress'd;
But when his Fanny to his mind convey'd
The growing treasures of the ancient maid,
The thirty years, come June, of service past,
Her lasting love, her life that would not last;
Her power! her place! what interest! what respect
She had acquired—and shall we her neglect?

"No, Frances, no!" he answer'd, "you are right;
"But things appear in such a different light!"
Her parents bless'd her, and, as well became
Their love, advised her, that they might not blame:
They said, "If she should earl or countess meet,
"She should be humble, cautious, and discreet;
"Humble, but not abased, remembering all
"Are kindred sinners,—children of the fall;
"That from the earth our being we receive,
"And are all equal when the earth we leave."

They then advised her in a modest way
To make replies to what my Lord might say;
Her aunt would aid her, who was now become
With nobles noble, and with lords at home.[1]

So went the pair; and William told at night
Of a reception gracious and polite;
He spake of galleries long and pictures tall,
The handsome parlours, the prodigious hall;
The busts, the statues, and the floors of stone,
The storied arras, and the vast saloon,
In which was placed an Indian chest and screen,
With figures such as he had never seen:
He told of these as men enraptured tell,
And gave to all their praise, and all was well.

Left by the lover, the desponding maid
Was of the matron's ridicule afraid;
But when she heard a welcome frank and kind,
The wonted firmness repossess'd her mind;
Pleased by the looks of love her aunt display'd,
Her fond professions, and her kind parade.

In her own room, and with her niece apart,
She gave up all the secrets of her heart;
And, grown familiar, bid her Fanny come,
Partake her cheer, and make herself at home.

Shut in that room, upon its cheerful board
She laid the comforts of no vulgar hoard;

[1] [Original MS.:—
The mother's whisper cannot here have place;
The words distinguish'd were but caps and lace,
With something lying in a cedar chest,
And a shrewd smile that further thoughts express'd.]

Then press'd the damsel both with love and pride,—
For both she felt,—and would not be denied.

Grace she pronounced before and after meat,
And bless'd her God that she could talk and eat;
Then with new glee she sang her patron's praise—
"He had no paltry arts, no pimping ways;
"She had the roast and boil'd of every day,
"That sent the poor with grateful hearts away;
"And she was grateful——Come, my darling, think
"Of them you love the best, and let us drink."

And now she drank the healths of those above,
Her noble friends, whom she must ever love;
But not together, not the young and old,
But one by one, the number duly told;
And told their merits too—there was not one
Who had not said a gracious thing or done;
Nor could she praise alone, but she would take
A cheerful glass for every favourite's sake,—
And all were favourites,—till the rosy cheek
Spoke for the tongue that nearly ceased to speak;
That rosy cheek that now began to shine,
And show the progress of the rosy wine;
But there she ended—felt the singing head,
Then pray'd as custom will'd, and so to bed.

The morn was pleasant, and the ancient maid
With her fair niece about the mansion stray'd:
There was no room without th' appropriate tale
Of blood and murder, female sprite or male;
There was no picture that th' historic dame
Pass'd by and gave not its peculiar fame;
The births, the visits, weddings, burials, all
That chanced for ages at the noble Hall.

These and each revolution she could state,
And give strange anecdotes of love and hate;
This was her first delight, her pride, her boast,—
She told of many an heiress, many a toast,
Of Lady Ellen's flight, of Lord Orlando's ghost;
The maid turn'd pale, and what should then ensue
But wine and cake?—the dame was frighten'd too.

The aunt and niece now walk'd about the grounds,
And sometimes met the gentry in their rounds;
"Do let us turn!" the timid girl exclaim'd—
"Turn!" said the aunt; "of what are you ashamed?
"What is there frightful in such looks as those?
"What is it, child, you fancy or suppose?
"Look at Lord Robert, see if you can trace
"More than true honour in that handsome face!

"What! you must think, by blushing in that way,
"My lord has something about love to say;
"But I assure you that he never spoke
"Such things to me in earnest or in joke,
"And yet I meet him in all sorts of times,
"When wicked men are thinking of their crimes."

"There! let them pass"——"Why, yes, indeed
't is true
"That was a look, and was design'd for you;
"But what the wonder when the sight is new?
"For my lord's virtue you may take my word,
"He would not do a thing that was absurd."

A month had pass'd; "And when will Fanny
come?"
The lover ask'd, and found the parents dumb:
They had not heard for more than half the space,
And the poor maiden was in much disgrace;
Silence so long they could not understand,
And this of one who wrote so neat a hand;
Their sister sure would send were aught amiss,
But youth is thoughtless—there is hope in this.

As time elapsed their wonder changed to woe,
William would lose another day, and go;
Yet, if she should be wilful and remain,
He had no power to take her home again:
But he would go!—He went and he return'd,—
And in his look the pair his tale discern'd:
Stupid in grief, it seem'd not that he knew
How he came home, or what he should pursue.
Fanny was gone!—her aunt was sick in bed,
Dying, she said—none cared if she were dead;
Her charge, his darling, was decoy'd, was fled!
But at what time, and whither, and with whom,
None seem'd to know—all surly, shy, or dumb.

Each blamed himself, all blamed the erring maid;
They vow'd revenge; they cursed their fate, and
pray'd.
Moved by his grief, the father sought the place,
Ask'd for his girl, and talk'd of her disgrace;
Spoke of the villain, on whose cursed head
He pray'd that vengeance might be amply shed;
Then sought his sister, and beheld her grief,
Her pain her danger,—this was no relief.

"Where is my daughter? bring her to my
sight!"—
"Brother, I 'm rack'd and tortured day and
night!"
"Talk not to me! what grief have you to tell?
"Is your soul rack'd, or is your bosom hell?
"Where is my daughter?"—"She would take her
oath
"For her right doing, for she knew them both,
"And my young lord was honour."—"Woman,
cease!
"And give your guilty conscience no such peace—
"You 've sold the wretched girl, you have betray'd
your niece."—
"The Lord be good! and O! the pains that come
"In limb and body—Brother, get you home!
"Your voice runs through me,—every angry word,
"If he should hear it, would offend my lord."

"Has he a daughter? let her run away
"With a poor dog, and hear what he will say!
"No matter what, I 'll ask him for his son."—
"And so offend? Now, brother, pray be gone!"

My lord appear'd, perhaps by pity moved,
And kindly said he no such things approved,
Nay, he was angry with the foolish boy,
Who might his pleasures at his ease enjoy;
The thing was wrong,—he hoped the farm did
well,—
The angry father doom'd the farm to hell;
He then desired to see the villain-son,
Though my lord warn'd him such excess to shun;
Told him he pardon'd, though he blamed such rage,
And bade him think upon his state and age.

"Think! yes, my lord! but thinking drives me
mad—
"Give me my child!—Where is she to be had?
"I 'm old and poor, but I with both can feel,
"And so shall he that could a daughter steal!
"Think you, my lord, I can be so bereft,
"And feel no vengeance for the villain's theft?
"Old if I am, could I the robber meet,
"I 'd lay his breathless body at my feet.
"Was that a smile, my lord? Think you your boy
"Will both the father and the child destroy?"
My lord replied, "I 'm sorry from my soul!
"But boys are boys, and there is no control."

"So, for your great ones, Justice slumbers then!
"If men are poor they must not feel as men.
"Will your son marry?"—"Marry!" said my lord,
"Your daughter?—marry—no, upon my word!"

"What, then, our stations differ!—But your
son
"Thought not of that—his crime has made them
one,
"In guilt united. She shall be his wife,
"Or I th' avenger that will take his life!"

"Old man, I pity and forgive you; rest
"In hope and comfort,—be not so distress'd;
"Things that seem bad oft happen for the best:
"The girl has done no more than thousands do,
"Nor has the boy—they laugh at me and you."
"And this my vengeance—curse him!"—"Nay,
forbear;
"I spare your frenzy, in compassion spare."

"Spare me, my lord! and what have I to dread?
"O! spare not, Heaven, the thunder o'er his
head—
"The bolt he merits!"
Such was his redress;
And he return'd, to brood upon distress.

And what of William?—William from the time
Appear'd partaker both of grief and crime;
He cared for nothing, nothing he pursued,
But walk'd about in melancholy mood:
He ceased to labour,—all he loved before
He now neglected, and would see no more.
He said his flute brought only to his mind
When he was happy, and his Fanny kind;
And his loved walks, and every object near,
And every evening-sound she loved to hear:
The shady lane, broad heath, and starry sky,
Brought home reflections, and he wish'd to die:
Yet there he stray'd, because he wish'd to shun
The world he hated, where his part was done;
As if, though lingering on the earth, he there
Had neither hope nor calling, tie nor care.

At length a letter from the daughter came,
" Frances" subscribed, and that the only name;
She " pitied much her parents, spoke of fate,
" And begg'd them to forget her, not to hate;
" Said she had with her all the world could give,
" And only pray'd that they in peace should live.
" That which is done is that we 're born to do;
" This she was taught, and she believed it true:
" True that she lived in pleasure and delight,
" But often dream'd and saw the farm by night;
" The boarded room that she had kept so neat,
" And all her roses in the window-seat;
" The pear-tree shade, the jasmine's lovely gloom,
" With its long twigs that blossom'd in the room;—
" But she was happy, and the tears that fell
" As she was writing had no grief to tell;
" We weep when we are glad, we sigh when we are well."

A bill enclosed, that they beheld with pain
And indignation, they return'd again;
There was no mention made of William's name,
Check'd as she was by pity, love, and shame.

William, who wrought for bread, and never sought
More than the day demanded when he wrought,
Was to a sister call'd, of all his race
The last, and dying in a distant place:
In tender terror he approach'd her bed,
Beheld her sick, and buried her when dead:
He was her heir, and what she left was more
Than he required, who was content before.

With their minds' sufferings, age, and growing pain,
That ancient couple could not long remain,
Nor long remain'd; and in their dying groan
The suffering youth perceived himself alone;
For of his health or sickness, peace or care,
He knew not one in all the world to share;
Now every scene would sad reflections give,
And most his home, and there he could not live;
There every walk would now distressing prove,
And of his loss remind him, and his love.

With the small portion by his sister left
He roved about as one of peace bereft,
And by the body's movements hoped to find
A kind of wearied stillness in the mind,
And sooner bring it to a sleepy state,
As rocking infants will their pains abate.

Thus, careless, lost, unheeding where he went,
Nine weary years the wandering lover spent.

His sole employment, all that could amuse,
Was his companions on the road to choose;
With such he travell'd through the passing day,
Friends of the hour, and walkers by the way;
And from the sick, the poor, the halt, the blind,
He learn'd the sorrows of his suffering kind.

He learn'd of many how unjust their fate,
For their connexions dwelt in better state;
They had relations famous, great or rich,
Learned or wise, they never scrupled which;
But while they cursed these kindred churls, would try
To build their fame, and for their glory lie.

Others delighted in misfortunes strange,
The sports of fortune in her love for change.

Some spoke of wonders they before had seen,
When on their travels they had wandering been;
How they had sail'd the world about, and found
The sailing plain, although the world was round;
How they beheld for months th' unsetting sun,
What deeds they saw! what they themselves had done!—
What leaps at Rhodes!—what glory then they won!

There were who spoke in terms of high disdain
Of their contending against power in vain,
Suffering from tyranny of law long borne,
And life's best spirits in contentions worn,—
Happy in this, th' oppressors soon will die,
Each with the vex'd and suffering man to lie—
And thus consoled exclaim, "And is not sorrow dry?"

But vice offended: when he met with those
Who could a deed of violence propose,
And cry, " Should they what we desire possess?
" Should they deprive us, and their laws oppress?"
William would answer, " Ours is not redress."
" Would you oppression then for ever feel?"—
" 'T is not my choice; but yet I must not steal."
" So, first they cheat us, and then make their laws
" To guard their treasures and to back their cause;
" What call you then, my friend, the rights of man?"—
" To get his bread," said William, " if he can;
" And if he cannot, he must then depend
" Upon a Being he may make his friend."
" Make!" they replied; and conference had end.

But female vagrants would at times express
A new-born pleasure at the mild address;
His modest wish he clothed in accent meek,
That they would comfort in religion seek.

" I am a sinful being!" William cried;
" Then, what am I?" the conscious heart replied:
And oft-times ponder'd in a pensive way,
" He is not happy, yet he loves to pray."

But some would freely on his thoughts intrude,
And thrust themselves 'twixt him and solitude:
They would his faith and of its strength demand,
And all his soul's prime motions understand.
How! they would say, such woe and such belief,
Such trust in Heaven, and yet on earth such grief!
Thou art almost, my friend,—thou art not all,
Thou hast not yet the self-destroying call;
Thou hast a carnal wish, perhaps a will
Not yet subdued,—the root is growing still:
There is the strong man yet that keeps his own,
Who by a stronger must be overthrown;
There is the burden that must yet be gone,
And then the pilgrim may go singing on.

William to this would seriously incline,
And to their comforts would his heart resign;
It soothed, it raised him,—he began to feel
Th' enlivening warmth of methodistic zeal;
He learn'd to know the brethren by their looks—
He sought their meetings, he perused their books;
But yet was not within the pale and yoke,
And as a novice of experience spoke;
But felt the comfort, and began to pray
For such companions on the king's highway.

William had now across the kingdom sped,
To th' Eastern Ocean from St. David's Head;
And wandering late, with various thoughts oppress'd,
'T was midnight ere he reach'd his place of rest,—
A village inn, that one wayfaring friend
Could from experience safely recommend,
Where the kind hostess would be more intent
On what he needed than on what he spent;
Her husband, once a heathen, she subdued,
And with religious fear his mind imbued;
Though his conviction came too late to save
An erring creature from an early grave.

Since that event, the cheerful widow grew
In size and substance,—her the brethren knew;
And many friends were hers, and lovers not a few:
But either love no more could warm her heart,
Or no man came who could the warmth impart.

William drew near, and saw the comely look
Of the good lady, bending o'er her book;
Hymns it appear'd,—for now a pleasing sound
Seem'd as a welcome in his wanderings found:
He enter'd softly, not as they who think
That they may act the ruffian if they drink,
And who conceive, that for their paltry pence
They may with rules of decency dispense;
Far unlike these was William,—he was kind,
Exacting nothing, and to all resign'd.

He saw the hostess reading,—and their eyes
Met in good will, and something like surprise:
It was not beauty William saw, but more,
Something like that which he had loved before—
Something that brought his Fanny to his view,
In the dear time when she was good and true;
And his, it seem'd, were features that were seen
With some emotion—she was not serene:
And both were moved to ask what looks like those could mean.
At first she colour'd to the deepest red,
That hurried off, till all the rose was fled;
She call'd a servant, whom she sent to rest,
Then made excuse to her attentive guest;
She own'd the thoughts confused,—'t was very true,
He brought a dear departed friend in view:
Then, as he listen'd, bade him welcome there
With livelier looks and more engaging air,
And stirr'd the fire of ling, and brush'd the wicker chair,
Waiting his order with the cheerful look
That proved how pleasant were the pains she took.

He was refresh'd.—They spake on various themes—
Our early pleasures, Reason's first-drawn schemes,
Youth's strong illusions, Love's delirious dreams:
Then from her book he would presume to ask
A song of praise, and she perform'd the task.
The clock struck twelve.—He started—"Must I go?"
His looks spoke plainly, and the lady's "No:"
So down he sat,—and when the clock struck one
There was no start, no effort to be gone:
Nor stay'd discourse.
"And so your loves were cross'd,
"And the loved object to your wishes lost?
"But was she faithless, or were you to blame?
"I wish I knew her—will you tell her name?"

"Excuse me—that would hurt her if alive;
"And, if no more, why should her fault survive?"

"But love you still?"—
"Alas! I feel I do,
"When I behold her very looks in you!"

"Yet, if the frail one's name must not be known,
"My friendly guest may trust me with his own."

This done, the lady paused, and then replied,—
"It grieves me much to see your spirit tried;
"But she was like me,—how I came to know
"The lamb that stray'd I will hereafter show;—
"We were indeed as sisters.—Should I state
"Her quiet end, you would no longer hate:
"I see your heart,—and I shall quickly prove,
"Though she deserved not, yet she prized your love:
"Long as she breathed was heard her William's name—
"And such affection half absolves her shame.

"Weep not, but hear me, how I came to know
"Thee and thy Frances—this to Heaven I owe;
"And thou shalt view the pledge, the very ring,
"The birthday token—well you know the thing;
"'This,' if I ever—thus I was to speak,
"As she had spoken—but I see you weak:
"She was not worthy——"
"Oh! you cannot tell
"By what accursed means my Fanny fell!
"What bane, compulsion, threats—for she was pure;
"But from such toils what being is secure?
"Force, not persuasion, robb'd me."
"You are right,
"So has she told me, in her Maker's sight:
"She loved not vice——"
"Oh! no,—her heart approved
"All that her God commanded to be loved;
"And she is gone."
"Consider! death alone
"Could for the errors of her life atone."

"Speak not of them: I would she knew how dear
"I hold her yet!—But dost thou give the tear
"To my loved Frances? No! I cannot part
"With one who has her face, who has her heart;

" With looks so pleasing, when I thee behold,
" She lives—that bosom is no longer cold.
" Then tell me—art thou not—in pity speak—
" One whom I sought, while living meant to seek—
" Art thou my Fanny?—Let me not offend,—
" Be something to me—be a sufferer's friend—
" Be more—be all!—the precious truth confess—
" Art thou not Frances?"—
" Oh, my William! yes!
" But spare me, spare thyself, and suffer less:
" In my best days, the spring-time of my life,
" I was not worthy to be William's wife;
" A widow now—not poor, indeed—not cast
" In outer darkness—sorrowing for the past,
" And for the future hoping—but no more:
" Let me the pledges of thy love restore,
" And give the ring thou gavest—let it be
" A token still of my regard for thee,
" But only that, and to a worthier now
" Consign the gift."—
" The only worthy thou!"
Replied the lover; and what more express'd
May be omitted—here our tale shall rest.

This pair, our host and hostess of the Fleece,
Command some wealth, and smile at its increase;
Saving and civil, cautious and discreet,
All sects and parties in their mansion meet;
There from their chapels teachers go to share
The creature-comforts,—mockery grins not there;
There meet the wardens at their annual feast,
With annual pun—"The parish must be fleeced;"
There traders find a parlour cleanly swept
For their reception, and in order kept;
And there the sons of labour, poor, but free,
Sit and enjoy their hour of liberty.

So live the pair,—and life's disasters seem
In their unruffled calm a troubled dream;
In comfort runs the remnant of their life—
He the fond husband, she the faithful wife.[2]

BOOK XX.

THE CATHEDRAL-WALK.

George in his hypochondriac State—A Family Mansion now a Farm-house—The Company there—Their Conversation—Subjects afforded by the Pictures—Doubts if Spirits can appear—Arguments—Facts—The Relation of an old Lady—Her Walks in a Cathedral—Appearance there.

In their discourse again the Brothers dwelt
On early subjects—what they once had felt,
Once thought of things mysterious;—themes that all
With some degree of reverence recall.

George then reverted to the days of old,
When his heart fainted, and his hope was cold;
When by the power of fancy he was sway'd,
And every impulse of the mind obey'd.

" Then, my dear Richard," said the Squire, " my case
" Was call'd consumptive—I must seek a place
" And soil salubrious, thither must repair,
" And live on asses' milk and milder air.
" My uncle bought a farm, and on the land
" The fine old mansion yet was left to stand,
" Not in this state, but old and much decay'd;
" Of this a part was habitable made.
" The rest,—who doubts?—was by the spirits seized,
" Ghosts of all kinds, who used it as they pleased.

" The worthy Farmer tenant yet remain'd,
" Of good report—he had a fortune gain'd;
" And his three daughters at their school acquired
" The air and manner that their swains admired:
" The mother-gossip and these daughters three
" Talk'd of genteel and social company;
" And while the days were fine, and walks were clean,
" A fresh assemblage day by day were seen.

" There were the Curate's gentle maids, and some
" From all the neighbouring villages would come;
" There, as I stole the yew-tree shades among,
" I saw the parties walking, old and young,
" Where I was nothing—if perceived, they said,
" ' The man is harmless, be not you afraid—
" ' A poor young creature, who, they say, is cross'd
" ' In love, and has in part his senses lost;
" ' His health for certain, and he comes to spend
" ' His time with us; we hope our air will mend
" ' A frame so weaken'd, for the learned tribe
" ' A change of air for stubborn ills prescribe;
" ' And doing nothing often has prevail'd
" ' When ten physicians have prescribed and fail'd;
" ' Not that for air or change there 's much to say,
" ' But nature then has time to take her way;
" ' And so we hope our village will restore
" ' This man to health that he possess'd before.
" ' He loves the garden avenues, the gloom
" ' Of the old chambers, of the tap'stried room,
" ' And we no notice take,—we let him go and come.'

" So spake a gay young damsel; but she knew
" Not all the truth,—in part her tale was true.
" Much it amused me in the place to be
" This harmless cipher, seeming not to see,
" Yet seeing all,—unnoticed to appear,
" Yet noting all; and not disposed to hear,
" But to go forth,—break in on no one's plan,
" And hear them speak of the forsaken man.[1]

" In scenes like these, a mansion so decay'd,
" With blighted trees in hoary moss array'd,

[2] ["' William Bailey' is the best of the tales of humble life that we find in these volumes; and is curiously and characteristically compounded of pathos and pleasantry, affecting incidents, and keen and sarcastic remarks."—JEFFREY.]

[1] [MS.:—
" To take my way, break in on no one's plan,
" Filling a pause—' The poor disorder'd man!'"]

" And ivy'd walls around, for many an hour
" I walk'd alone, and felt their witching power;
" So others *felt*;—the young of either sex
" Would in these walks their timid minds perplex
" By meeting terrors, and the old appear'd,
" Their fears upbraiding, like the young who fear'd;
" Among *them* all some sad discourse at night
" Was sure to breed a terrified delight:
" Some luckless one of the attentive dames
" Had figures seen like those within the frames,
" Figures of lords who once the land possess'd,
" And who could never in their coffins rest:
" Unhappy spirits! who could not abide
" The loss of all their consequence and pride,
" 'T was death in all his power, their very names had died.

" These tales of terror views terrific bred,
" And sent the hearers trembling to their bed."

In an autumnal evening, cool and still,
The sun just dropp'd beneath a distant hill,
The children gazing on the quiet scene,
Then rose in glory night's majestic queen;
And pleasant was the checker'd light and shade
Her golden beams and maple shadows made;
An ancient tree that in the garden grew,
And that fair picture on the gravel threw.

Then all was silent, save the sounds that make
Silence more awful, while they faintly break;
The frighten'd bat's low shriek, the beetle's hum,
With nameless sounds we know not whence they come.

Such was the evening; and that ancient seat
The scene where then some neighbours chanced to meet;
Up to the door led broken steps of stone,
Whose dewy surface in the moonlight shone
On vegetation that with progress slow,
Where man forbears to fix his foot, will grow;
The window's depth and dust repell'd the ray
Of the moon's light and of the setting day;
Pictures there were, and each display'd a face
And form that gave their sadness to the place;
The frame and canvas show'd that worms unseen,
Save in their works, for years had working been;
A fire of brushwood on the irons laid,
All the dull room in fitful views display'd,
And with its own wild light in fearful forms array'd.

In this old Hall, in this departing day,
Assembled friends and neighbours, grave and gay,
When one good lady at a picture threw
A glance that caused inquiry,—" Tell us who?"

" That was a famous warrior; one, they said,
" That by a spirit was a while obey'd:
" In all his dreadful battles he would say,
" ' Or win or lose, I shall escape to-day;'
" And though the shot as thick as hail came round,
" On no occasion he received a wound;
" He stood in safety, free from all alarm,
" Protected—Heaven forgive him!—by his charm:
" But he forgot the date, till came the hour
" When he no more had the protecting power;
" And then he bade his friends around farewell!
" ' I fall!' he cried, and in the instant fell.

" Behold those infants in the frame beneath!
" A witch offended wrought their early death;
" She form'd an image, made as wax to melt,
" And each the wasting of the figure felt;
" The hag confess'd it when she came to die,
" And no one living can the truth deny.

" But see a beauty in King William's days,
" With that long waist, and those enormous stays:
" She had three lovers, and no creature knew
" The one preferr'd, or the discarded two;
" None could the secret of her bosom see;
" Loving—poor maid!—the attention of the three,
" She kept such equal weight in either scale,
" 'Twas hard to say who would at last prevail.
" Thus you may think in either heart arose
" A jealous anger, and the men were foes:
" Each with himself concluded, two aside,
" The third may make the lovely maid his bride:
" This caused their fate.—It was on Thursday night
" The deed was done, and bloody was the fight;
" Just as she went—poor thoughtless girl!—to prayers,
" Ran wild the maid with horror up the stairs;
" Pale as a ghost, but not a word she said,
" And then the lady utter'd, ' Coates is dead!'

" Then the poor damsel found her voice and cried,
" ' Ran through the body, and that instant died!
" ' But he pronounced your name—and so was satisfied.'
" A second fell, and he who did survive
" Was kept by skill and sovereign drugs alive!
" ' O! would she see me!' he was heard to say:
" ' No! I 'll torment him to his dying day,'
" The maid exclaim'd, and every Thursday night
" Her spirit came his wretched soul to fright.
" Once as she came he cried aloud, ' Forgive!'
" ' Never!' she answer'd; ' never while you live,
" ' Nor when you die, as long as time endures;
" ' You have my torment been, and I 'll be yours!'
" That is the lady! and the man confess'd
" Her vengeful spirit would not let him rest."

" But are there Ghosts?" exclaim'd a timid maid;
" My father tells me not to be afraid;
" He cries, ' When buried, we are safe enough,'—
" And calls such stories execrable stuff."

" Your father, child," the former lady cried,
" Has learning much, but he has too much pride;
" It is impossible for him to tell
" What things in nature are impossible,
" Or out of nature, or to prove to whom
" Or for what purposes a ghost may come;
" It may not be intelligence to bring,
" But to keep up a notion of the thing;

" And though from one such fact there may arise
" A hundred wild improbabilities,
" Yet, had there never been the truth, I say,
" The very lies themselves had died away."

" True," said a friend; " Heaven doubtless may dispense
" A kind of dark and clouded evidence;
" God has not promised that he will not send
" A spirit freed to either foe or friend;
" He may such proof, and only such, bestow,
" Though we the certain truth can never know;
" And therefore, though such floating stories bring
" No strong or certain vouchers of the thing,
" Still would I not, presuming, pass my word
" That all such tales were groundless and absurd."

" But you will grant," said one who sat beside,
" That all appear so when with judgment tried?"

" For that concession, madam, you may call,
" When we have sat in judgment upon all."

An ancient lady, who with pensive smile
Had heard the stories, and been mute the while,
Now said, " Our prudence had been better shown
" By leaving uncontested things unknown;
" Yet, if our children must such stories hear,
" Let us provide some antidotes to fear:
" For all such errors in the minds of youth,
" In any mind, the only cure is Truth;
" And truths collected may in time decide
" Upon such facts, or prove, at least, a guide:
" If, then, permitted, I will fairly state
" One fact, nor doubt the story I relate;
" I for your perfect acquiescence call,
" 'T is of myself I tell."—" O! tell us all!"
Said every being there: then silent was the Hall.

" Early in life, beneath my parent's roof,
" Of man's true honour I had noble proof—
" A generous lover, who was worthy found,
" Where half his sex are hollow and unsound.

" My father fail'd in trade, and sorrowing died,
" When all our loss a generous youth supplied;
" And soon the time drew on when he should say,
" ' O! fix the happy, fix the early day!'
" Nor meant I to oppose his wishes, or delay:
" But then came fever, slight at first indeed,
" Then hastening on and threatening in its speed;
" It mock'd the powers of medicine; day by day
" I saw those helpers sadly walk away;—
" So came the hand-like cloud, and with such power,
" And with such speed, that brought the mighty shower.
" Him nursed I dying, and we freely spoke
" Of what might follow the expected stroke;
" We talk'd of spirits, of their unknown powers,
" And dared to dwell on what the fate of ours;
" But the dread promise to appear again,
" Could it be done, I sought not to obtain;
" But yet we were presuming,—' Could it be,'
" He said, ' O Emma! I would come to thee!'

" At his last hour his reason, late astray,
" Again return'd t' illuminate his way.

" In the last night, my mother long had kept
" Unwearied watch, and now reclined and slept;
" The nurse was dreaming in a distant chair,
" And I had knelt to soothe him with a prayer;
" When, with a look of that peculiar kind
" That gives its purpose to the fellow mind,
" His manner spoke—' Confide—be not afraid—
" ' I shall remember,'—this was all convey'd,—
" ' I know not what awaits departed man,
" ' But this believe—I meet thee if I can.'

" I wish'd to die,—and grief, they say, will kill,
" But you perceive 't is slowly if it will;
" That I was wretched you may well believe—
" I judged it right, and was resolved to grieve:
" I lost my mother when there lived not one,
" Man, woman, child, whom I would seek or shun.

" The Dean, my uncle, with congenial gloom,
" Said, ' Will you share a melancholy home?'
" For he bewail'd a wife, as I deplored
" My fate, and bliss that could not be restored.

" In his Cathedral's gloom I pass'd my time,
" Much in devotion, much in thought sublime;
" There oft I paced the aisles, and watch'd the glow
" Of the sun setting on the stones below,
" And saw the failing light, that strove to pass
" Through the dim coating of the storied glass,
" Nor fell within, but till the day was gone
" The red faint fire upon the window shone.
" I took the key, and oft-times chose to stay
" Till all was vanish'd of the tedious day,
" Till I perceived no light, nor heard a sound,
" That gave me notice of a world around.

" Then had I grief's proud thoughts, and said, in tone
" Of exultation, ' World, I am alone!
" ' I care not for thee, thou art vile and base,
" ' And I shall leave thee for a nobler place.'

" So I the world abused,—in fact, to me
" Urbane and civil as a world could be:
" Nor should romantic grievers thus complain,
" Although but little in the world they gain;
" But let them think if they have nothing done
" To make this odious world so sad a one,
" Or what their worth and virtue that should make
" This graceless world so pleasant for their sake.

" But to my tale:—Behold me as I tread
" The silent mansions of the favour'd dead,
" Who sleep in vaulted chambers, till their clay
" In quiet dissolution melts away
" In this their bodies' home—the spirits, where are they?
" ' And where *his* spirit?—Doors and walls impede
" ' The embodied spirit, not the spirit freed!'

" And, saying this, I at the altar knelt,
" And painful joys and rapturous anguish felt;
" Till strong bold hopes possess'd me, and I cried,
" ' Even at this instant is he at my side;
" ' Yes, now, dear spirit! art thou by to prove
" ' That mine is lasting, mine the loyal love!'

" Thus have I thought, returning to the Dean,
" As one who had some glorious vision seen:
" He ask'd no question, but would sit and weep,
" And cry, in doleful tone, ' I cannot sleep!'

" In dreams the chosen of my heart I view'd,
" And thus th' impression day by day renew'd.
" I saw him always, always loved to see,
" For when alone he was my company:
" In company with him alone I seem'd,
" And, if not dreaming, was as one who dream'd.

" Thus, robb'd of sleep, I found, when evening came,
" A pleasing torpor steal upon my frame;
" But still the habit drew my languid feet
" To the loved darkness of the favourite seat;
" And there, by silence and by sadness press'd,
" I felt a world my own, and was at rest.

" One night, when urged with more than usual zeal,
" And feeling all that such enthusiasts feel,
" I paced the altar by, the pillars round,
" And knew no terror in the sacred ground;—
" For mine were thoughts that banish'd all such fear,—
" I wish'd, I long'd to have that form appear;
" And, as I paced the sacred aisles, I cried,
" ' Let not thy Emma's spirit be denied
" ' The sight of thine; or, if I may not see,
" ' Still by some token let her certain be!'

" At length the anxious thoughts my strength subdued,
" And sleep o'erpower'd me in my solitude;
" Then was I dreaming of unearthly race,
" The glorious inmates of a blessed place;
" Where lofty minds celestial views explore,
" Heaven's bliss enjoy, and heaven's great King adore;
" Him there I sought whom I had loved so well—
" For sure he dwelt where happy spirits dwell!

" While thus engaged, I started at a sound,
" Of what I knew not, but I look'd around;
" For I was borne on visionary wings,
" And felt no dread of sublunary things;
" But, rising, walk'd.—A distant window threw
" A weak, soft light, that help'd me in my view;
" Something with anxious heart I hoped to see,
" And pray'd, ' O! God of all things, let it be!
" ' For all are thine, were made by thee, and thou
" ' Canst both the meeting and the means allow;
" ' Thou canst make clear my sight, or thou canst make
" ' More gross the form that his loved mind shall take,
" ' Canst clothe his spirit for my fleshly sight,
" ' Or make my earthly sense more pure and bright.'

" So was I speaking, when without a sound
" There was a movement in the sacred ground;
" I saw a figure rising, but could trace
" No certain features, no peculiar face;
" But I prepared my mind that form to view,
" Nor felt a doubt,—he promised, and was true!
" I should embrace his angel, and my clay,
" And what was mortal in me, melt away.

" Oh! that ecstatic horror in my frame,
" That o'er me thus, a favour'd mortal, came!
" Bless'd beyond mortals,—and the body now
" I judged would perish, though I knew not how;
" The gracious power around me could translate
" And make me pass to that immortal state:
" Thus shall I pay the debt that must be paid,
" And dying live, nor be by death delay'd;
" And when so changed, I should with joy sustain
" The heavenly converse, and with him remain.

" I saw the distant shade, and went with awe,
" But not with terror, to the form I saw:
" Yet slowly went, for he I did believe
" Would meet, and soul to soul his friend receive;
" So on I drew, concluding in my mind,
" I cannot judge what laws may spirits bind;
" Though I dissolve, and mingle with the bless'd,
" I am a new and uninstructed guest,
" And ere my love can speak, he should be first address'd.

" Thus I began to speak,—my new-born pride,
" My love, and daring hope, the words supplied:—
" ' Dear, happy shade! companion of the good,
" ' The just, the pure, do I on thee intrude?
" ' Art thou not come my spirit to improve,
" ' To form, instruct, and fit me for thy love,
" ' And, as in love we parted, to restore
" ' The blessing lost, and then to part no more?
" ' Let me with thee in thy pure essence dwell,
" ' Nor go to bid them of my house farewell,
" ' But thine be ever!'—How shall I relate
" Th' event that finish'd this ecstatic state?
" Yet let me try.—It turn'd, and I beheld
" A hideous form, that hope and zeal expell'd:
" In a dim light the horrid shape appear'd,
" That wisdom would have fled, and courage fear'd,
" Pale, and yet bloated, with distorted eyes
" Distant and deep, a mouth of monstrous size,
" That would in day's broad glare a simple maid surprise:
" He heard my words, and cried, with savage shout,
" ' Bah!—bother!—blarney!—What is this about?'

" Love, lover, longing, in an instant fled,
" Now I had vice and impudence to dread;
" And all my high-wrought fancies died away,
" To woman's trouble, terror, and dismay.

" ' What,' said the wretch, ' what is it you would have?
" ' Would'st hang a man for peeping in a grave?
" ' Search me yourself, and try if you can feel
" ' Aught I have taken,—there was nought to steal:
" ' 'T was told they buried with the corpse enough
" ' To pay the hazard,—I have made the proof,

" ' Nor gain'd a tester.—What I tell is true;
" ' But I 'm no fool, to be betray'd by you,—
" ' I 'll hazard nothing, curse me if I do!'

" The light increased, and plainly now appear'd
" A knavish fool whom I had often fear'd,
" But hid the dread; and I resolved at least
" Not to expose it to the powerful beast.

" ' Come, John,' I said, suppressing fear and doubt,
" ' Walk on before, and let a lady out!'—
" ' Lady!' the wretch replied, with savage grin,
" ' Apply to him that let the lady in:
" ' What! you would go, I take it, to the Dean,
" ' And tell him what your ladyship has seen.'

" When thus the fool exposed the knave, I saw
" The means of holding such a mind in awe,
" And gain my safety by his dread of law.

" ' Alas!' I cried, 'I fear the Dean like you,
" ' For I transgress, and am in trouble too:
" ' If it be known that we are here, as sure
" ' As here we are we must the law endure:
" ' Each other's counsel therefore let us keep,
" ' And each steal homeward to our beds and sleep.'

" ' Steal!' said the ruffian's conscience.—' Well, agreed;
" ' Steal on, and let us to the door proceed:'—
" Yet, ere he moved, he stood a while, and took
" Of my poor form a most alarming look;
" ' But, hark!' I cried, and he to move began,—
" Escape alone engaged the dreadful man:
" With eager hand I oped the ponderous door—
" The wretch rush'd by me, and was heard no more.

" So I escaped,—and when my dreams came on,
" I check'd the madness by the thoughts of John:
" Yet say I not what can or cannot be,
" But give the story of my Ghost and me."

BOOK XXI.

SMUGGLERS AND POACHERS.

A Widow at the Hall—Inquiry of Richard—Relation of two Brothers—Their different Character—Disposition—Mode of thinking—James a Servant—Robert joins the Smugglers—Rachel at the Hall—James attached to her—Trade fails—Robert a Poacher—Is in Danger—How released—James and Rachel—Revenge excited—Association formed—Attack resolved—Preparation made for Resistance—A Night Adventure—Reflections.

There was a Widow in the village known
To our good Squire, and he had favour shown
By frequent bounty.—She as usual came,
And Richard saw the worn and weary frame,
Pale cheek, and eye subdued, of her whose mind
Was grateful still, and glad a friend to find,
Though to the world long since and all its hopes resign'd:
Her easy form, in rustic neatness clad,
Was pleasing still, but she for ever sad.

" Deep is her grief!" said Richard,—" truly deep,
" And very still, and therefore seems to sleep;
" To borrow simile, to paint her woes,
" Theirs, like the river's motion, seems repose,
" Making no petty murmuring,—settled, slow,
" They never waste, they never overflow.
" Rachel is one of those—for there are some
" Who look for nothing in their days to come,
" No good nor evil, neither hope nor fear,
" Nothing remains or cheerful or severe;
" One day is like the past, the year's sweet prime
" Like the sad fall,—for Rachel heeds not time:
" Nothing remains to agitate her breast,
" Spent is the tempest, and the sky at rest;
" But while it raged her peace its ruin met,
" And now the sun is on her prospects set;—
" Leave her, and let us her distress explore,
" She heeds it not—she has been left before."

There were two lads call'd Shelley hither brought,
But whence we know not—it was never sought;
Their wandering mother left them, left her name,
And the boys throve and valiant men became:
Handsome, of more than common size, and tall,
And, no one's kindred, seem'd beloved of all:
All seem'd alliance by their deeds to prove,
And loved the youths who could not claim their love.
One was call'd James, the more sedate and grave,
The other Robert—names their neighbours gave;
They both were brave, but Robert loved to run
And meet his danger—James would rather shun
The dangerous trial, but, whenever tried,
He all his spirit to the act applied.

Robert would aid on any man bestow,
James would his man and the occasion know;
For that was quick and prompt—this temperate and slow.
Robert would all things he desired pursue,
James would consider what was best to do;
All spoke of Robert as a man they loved,
And most of James as valued and approved.

Both had some learning: Robert his acquired
By quicker parts, and was by praise inspired;
James, as he was in his acquirements slow,
Would learn the worth of what he tried to know.
In fact, this youth was generous—that was just;
The one you loved, the other you would trust:
Yet him you loved you would for truth approve,
And him you trusted you would likewise love.

Such were the brothers—James had found his way
To Nether Hall, and there inclined to stay;
He could himself command, and therefore could obey.
He with the keeper took his daily round,
A rival grew, and some unkindness found;
But his superior farm'd! the place was void,
And James guns, dogs, and dignity enjoy'd.

Robert had scorn of service; he would be
A slave to no man—happy were the free,
And only they: by such opinions led,
Robert to sundry kinds of trade was bred;
Nor let us wonder if he sometimes made
An active partner in a lawless trade;
Fond of adventure, wanton as the wave,
He loved the danger and the law to brave;
But these were chance-adventures, known to few,—
Not that the hero cared what people knew.

The brothers met not often—When they met,
James talk'd of honest gains and scorn of debt,
Of virtuous labour, of a sober life,
And what with credit would support a wife.

But Robert answer'd,—"How can men advise
"Who to a master let their tongue and eyes?
"Whose words are not their own? whose foot and hand
"Run at a nod, or act upon command?
"Who cannot eat or drink, discourse or play,
"Without requesting others that they may?
"Debt you would shun; but what advice to give,
"Who owe your service every hour you live:
"Let a bell sound, and from your friends you run,
"Although the darling of your heart were one;
"But if the bondage fits you, I resign
"You to your lot—I am content with mine!"

Thus would the Lads their sentiments express,
And part in earnest, part in playfulness;
Till Love, controller of all hearts and eyes,
Breaker of bonds, of friendship's holy ties,
Awakener of new wills and slumbering sympathies,
Began his reign,—till Rachel, meek-eyed maid,
That form, those cheeks, that faultless face display'd,
That child of gracious nature, ever neat
And never fine; a flow'ret simply sweet,
Seeming at least unconscious she was fair;
Meek in her spirit, timid in her air,
And shrinking from his glance if one presumed
To come too near the beauty as it bloom'd.

Robert beheld her in her father's cot
Day after day, and bless'd his happy lot;
He look'd indeed, but he could not offend
By gentle looks—he was her father's friend:
She was accustom'd to that tender look,
And frankly gave the hand he fondly took;
She loved his stories, pleased she heard him play,
Pensive herself, she loved to see him gay,
And if they loved not yet, they were in Love's highway.

But Rachel now to womanhood was grown,
And would no more her faith and fondness own;
She call'd her latent prudence to her aid,
And grew observant, cautious, and afraid;
She heard relations of her lover's guile,
And could believe the danger of his smile;
With art insidious rival damsels strove
To show how false his speech, how feign'd his love;
And though her heart another story told,
Her speech grew cautious, and her manner cold.

Rachael had village fame, was fair and tall,
And gain'd a place of credit at the Hall;
Where James beheld her seated in that place,
With a child's meekness, and an angel's face;
Her temper soft, her spirit firm, her words
Simple and few as simple truth affords.

James could but love her,—he at church had seen
The tall, fair maid, had met her on the green,
Admiring, always, nor surprised to find
Her figure often present to his mind;
But now he saw her daily, and the sight
Gave him new pleasure and increased delight.

But James, still prudent and reserved, though sure
The love he felt was love that would endure,
Would wait a while, observing what was fit,
And meet, and right, nor would himself commit;
Then was he flatter'd—James in time became
Rich, both as slayer of the Baron's game
And as protector,—not a female dwelt
In that demesne who had not feign'd or felt
Regard for James; and he from all had praise
Enough a young man's vanity to raise;
With all these pleasures he of course must part,
When Rachel reign'd sole empress of his heart.

Robert was now deprived of that delight
He once experienced in his mistress' sight;
For, though he now his frequent visits paid,
He saw but little of the cautious maid:
The simple common pleasures that he took
Grew dull, and he the wonted haunts forsook;
His flute and song he left, his book and pen,
And sought the meetings of adventurous men;
There was a love-born sadness in his breast,
That wanted stimulus to bring on rest;
These simple pleasures were no more of use,
And danger only could repose produce;
He join'd th' associates in their lawless trade,
And was at length of their profession made.

He saw connected with th' adventurous crew
Those whom he judged were sober men and true;
He found that some, who should the trade prevent,
Gave it by purchase their encouragement;
He found that contracts could be made with those
Who had their pay these dealers to oppose;
And the good ladies whom at church he saw
With looks devout, of reverence and awe,
Could change their feelings as they change their place,
And, whispering, deal for spicery and lace:
And thus the craft and avarice of these
Urged on the youth, and gave his conscience ease.

Him loved the maiden Rachel, fondly loved,
As many a sigh and tear in absence proved,
And many a fear for dangers that she knew,
And many a doubt what one so gay might do:
Of guilt she thought not,—she had often heard
They bought and sold, and nothing wrong appear'd;
Her father's maxim this: she understood
There was some ill,—but he, she knew, was good:

It was a traffic—but was done by night—
If wrong, how trade? why secrecy, if right?
But Robert's conscience, she believed, was pure—
And that he read his Bible she was sure.

James, better taught, in confidence declared
His grief for what his guilty brother dared:
He sigh'd to think how near he was akin
To one reduced by godless men to sin;
Who, being always of the law in dread,
To other crimes were by the danger led—
And crimes with like excuse.—The Smuggler cries,
"What guilt is his who pays for what he buys?"
The Poacher questions, with perverted mind,
"Were not the gifts of Heaven for all design'd?"
This cries, "I sin not—take not till I pay;"—
That, "My own hand brought down my proper prey:"—
And while to such fond arguments they cling,
How fear they God? how honour they the king?
Such men associate, and each other aid,
Till all are guilty, rash, and desperate made;
Till to some lawless deed the wretches fly,
And in the act, or for the acting, die.

The maid was frighten'd,—but, if this was true,
Robert for certain no such danger knew;
He always pray'd ere he a trip began,
And was too happy for a wicked man:
How could a creature, who was always gay,
So kind to all men, so disposed to pray,—
How could he give his heart to such an evil way?
Yet she had fears,—for she could not believe
That James could lie, or purpose to deceive;
But still she found, though not without respect
For one so good, she must the man reject;
For, simple though she was, full well she knew
What this strong friendship led him to pursue;
And, let the man be honest as the light,
Love warps the mind a little from the right;
And she proposed, against the trying day,
What in the trial she should think and say.

And now, their love avow'd, in both arose
Fear and disdain,—the orphan pair were foes.

Robert, more generous of the two, avow'd
His scorn, defiance, and contempt aloud.

James talk'd of pity in a softer tone,
To Rachel speaking, and with her alone:
He knew full well, he said, to what must come
His wretched brother, what would be his doom:
Thus he her bosom fenced with dread about;
But love he could not with his skill drive out.
Still he effected something,—and that skill
Made the love wretched, though it could not kill;
And Robert fail'd, though much he tried, to prove
He had no guilt—she granted he had love.

Thus they proceeded, till a winter came,
When the stern keeper told of stolen game:
Throughout the woods the poaching dogs had been,
And from him nothing should the robbers screen,
From him and law,—he would all hazards run,
Nor spare a poacher, were his brother one,—
Love, favour, interest, tie of blood should fail,
Till vengeance bore him bleeding to the jail.

Poor Rachel shudder'd,—smuggling she could name
Without confusion, for she felt not shame;
But poachers were her terror, and a wood
Which they frequented had been mark'd by blood;
And though she thought her Robert was secure
In better thoughts, yet could she not be sure.

James now was urgent,—it would break his heart
With hope, with her, and with such views to part,
When one so wicked would her hand possess,
And he a brother!—that was his distress,
And must be hers.—She heard him, and she sigh'd,
Looking in doubt,—but nothing she replied.
There was a generous feeling in her mind,
That told her this was neither good nor kind:
James caused her terror, but he did no more—
Her love was now as it had been before.

Their traffic fail'd—and the adventurous crew
No more their profitless attempts renew:
Dig they will not, and beg they might in vain,
Had they not pride, and what can then remain?

Now was the game destroy'd, and not a hare
Escaped at least the danger of the snare;
Woods of their feather'd beauty were bereft,
The beauteous victims of the silent theft;
The well-known shops received a large supply,
That they who could not kill at least might buy.

James was enraged, enraged his lord, and both
Confirm'd their threatening with a vengeful oath:
Fresh aid was sought,—and nightly on the lands
Walk'd on their watch the strong, determined bands:
Pardon was offer'd, and a promised pay,
To him who would the desperate gang betray.
Nor fail'd the measure,—on a certain night
A few were seized—the rest escaped by flight;
Yet they resisted boldly ere they fled,
And blows were dealt around, and blood was shed;
Two groaning helpers on the earth were laid,
When more arrived the lawful cause to aid;
Then four determined men were seized and bound,
And Robert in this desperate number found:
In prison fetter'd, he deplored his fate,
And cursed the folly he perceived too late.

James was a favourite with his lord,—the zeal
He show'd was such as masters ever feel:
If he for vengeance on a culprit cried,
Or if for mercy, still his lord complied;
And now, 't was said, he will for mercy plead,
For his own brother's was the guilty deed:
True, the hurt man is in a mending way,
But must be crippled to his dying day.

Now James had vow'd the law should take its course,
He would not stay it, if he did not force;
He could his witness, if he pleased, withdraw,
Or he could arm with certain death the law:

This he attested to the maid, and true,
If this he could not, yet he much could do.

How suffer'd then that maid!—no thought she had,
No view of days to come, that was not sad;
As sad as life with all its hopes resign'd,
As sad as aught but guilt can make mankind.

With bitter grief the pleasure she review'd
Of early hope, with innocence pursued,
When she began to love, and he was fond and good.
He now must die, she heard from every tongue—
Die, and so thoughtless! perish, and so young!
Brave, kind, and generous, tender, constant, true—
And he must die—"Then will I perish too!"

A thousand acts in every age will prove
Women are valiant in a cause they love;
If fate the favour'd swain in danger place,
They heed not danger—perils they embrace;
They dare the world's contempt, they brave their name's disgrace;
They on the ocean meet its wild alarms,
They search the dungeon with extended arms;
The utmost trial of their faith they prove,
And yield the lover to assert their love.

James knew his power—his feelings were not nice—
Mercy he sold, and she must pay the price:
If his good lord forbore to urge their fate,
And he the utmost of their guilt to state,
The felons might their forfeit lives redeem,
And in their country's cause regain esteem;
But never more that man, whom he had shame
To call his brother, must she see or name.

Rachel was meek, but she had firmness too,
And reason'd much on what she ought to do:
In Robert's place, she knew what she should choose—
But life was not the thing she fear'd to lose:
She knew that she could not their contract break,
Nor for her life a new engagement make;
But he was man, and guilty,—death so near
Might not to his as to her mind appear;
And he might wish, to spare that forfeit life,
The maid he loved might be his brother's wife,
Although that brother was his bitter foe,
And he must all the sweets of life forego.

This would she try,—intent on this alone,
She could assume a calm and settled tone:
She spake with firmness,—"I will Robert see,
"Know what he wishes, and what I must be;"
For James had now discover'd to the maid
His inmost heart, and how he must be paid,
If he his lord would soften, and would hide
The facts that must the culprit's fate decide.
"Go not," he said,—for she her full intent
Proclaim'd—to go she purposed, and she went:
She took a guide, and went with purpose stern
The secret wishes of her friend to learn.

She saw him fetter'd, full of grief, alone,
Still as the dead, and he suppress'd a groan
At her appearance.—Now she pray'd for strength;
And the sad couple could converse at length.
It was a scene that shook her to repeat,—
Life fought with love, both powerful, and both sweet.

"Wilt thou die, Robert, or preserve thy life?
"Shall I be thine own maid, or James's wife?"

"His wife!—No!—never will I thee resign—
"No, Rachel, no!"—"Then am I ever thine:
"I know thee rash and guilty,—but to thee
"I pledged my vow, and thine will ever be.
"Yet think again,—the life that God has lent
"Is thine, but not to cast away—consent,
"If 't is thy wish; for this I made my way
"To thy distress—command, and I obey."

"Perhaps my brother may have gain'd thy heart?"
"Then why this visit, if I wish'd to part?
"Was it—ah, man ungrateful!—wise to make
"Effort like this, to hazard for thy sake
"A spotless reputation, and to be
"A suppliant to that stern man for thee!
"But I forgive,—thy spirit has been tried,
"And thou art weak, but still thou must decide.

"I ask'd thy brother James, wouldst thou command,
"Without the loving heart, the obedient hand?
"I ask thee, Robert, lover, canst thou part
"With this poor hand, when master of the heart?—
"He answer'd, Yes!—I tarry thy reply,
"Resign'd with him to live, content with thee to die."

Assured of this, with spirits low and tame,
Here life so purchased—there a death of shame;
Death once his merriment, but now his dread,
And he with terror thought upon the dead:
"O! sure 't is better to endure the care
"And pain of life, than go we know not where:—
"And is there not the dreaded hell for sin,
"Or is it only this I feel within?,
"That, if it lasted, no man would sustain,
"But would by any change relieve the pain:
"Forgive me, love! it is a loathsome thing
"To live not thine; but still this dreaded sting
"Of death torments me,—I to nature cling.
"Go, and be his—but love him not, be sure—
"Go, love him not,—and I will life endure:
"He, too, is mortal!"—Rachel deeply sigh'd,
But would no more converse: she had complied,
And was no longer free—she was his brother's bride.

"Farewell!" she said, with kindness, but not fond,
Feeling the pressure of the recent bond,
And put her tenderness apart to give
Advice to one who so desired to live:
She then departed, join'd the attending guide,
Reflected—wept—was sad—was satisfied.

James on her worth and virtue could depend,—
He listen'd gladly to her story's end:

Again he promised Robert's life to save,
And claim'd the hand that she in payment gave.

Robert, when death no longer was in view,
Scorn'd what was done, but could not this undo:
The day appointed for the trial near
He view'd with shame, and not unmix'd with fear:
James might deceive him; and, if not, the schemes
Of men may fail.—"Can I depend on James?"

He might; for now the grievous price was paid—
James to the altar led the victim maid,
And gave the trembling girl his faithful word
For Robert's safety, and so gave my lord.

But this, and all the promise hope could give,
Gilded not life,—it was not joy to live;
There was no smile in Rachel, nothing gay,
The hours pass'd off, but never danced away.
When drew the gloomy day for trial near,
There came a note to Robert,—"Banish fear!"

He knew whence safety came,—his terror fled,
But rage and vengeance fill'd his soul instead.

A stronger fear in his companions rose—
The day of trial on their hopes might close:
They had no brothers, none to intercede
For them, their friends suspected, and in need;
Scatter'd, they judged, and could unite no more,—
Not so,—they then were at the prison door.

For some had met who sought the haunts they loved,
And were to pity and to vengeance moved:
Their fellows perish? and they see their fall?—
Why not attempt the steep but guardless wall?

Attempt was made, his part assign'd each man,
And they succeeded in the desperate plan;
In truth, a purposed mercy smoothed their way,
But that they knew not—all triumphant they.
Safe in their well-known haunts, they all prepared
To plan anew, and show how much they dared.

With joy the troubled heart of Robert beat,
For life was his, and liberty was sweet;
He look'd around in freedom—in delight?
O! no—his Rachel was another's right!
"Right!—has he then preserved me in the day
"Of my distress?—He has the lovely pay!
"But I no freedom at the slave's request,—
"The price I paid shall then be repossess'd!
"Alas! her virtue and the law prevent,
"Force cannot be, and she will not consent;
"But were that brother gone!—A brother? No!
"A circumventor!—and the wretch shall go!
"Yet not this hand—How shifts about my mind,
"Ungovern'd, guideless, drifting in the wind!
"And I am all a tempest, whirl'd around
"By dreadful thoughts, that fright me and confound.
"I would I saw him on the earth laid low!
"I wish the fate, but must not give the blow!"

So thinks a man when thoughtful; he prefers
A life of peace till man his anger stirs,
Then all the efforts of his reason cease,
And he forgets how pleasant was that peace;
Till the wild passions what they seek obtain,
And then he sinks into his calm again.

Now met the lawless clan,—in secret met,
And down at their convivial board were set;
The plans in view to past adventures led,
And the past conflicts present anger bred;
They sigh'd for pleasures gone, they groan'd for heroes dead:
Their ancient stores were rifled,—strong desires
Awaked, and wine rekindled latent fires.

It was a night such bold desires to move,
Strong winds and wintry torrents fill'd the grove;
The crackling boughs that in the forest fell,
The cawing rooks, the cur's affrighten'd yell,
The scenes above the wood, the floods below,
Were mix'd, and none the single sound could know;
"Loud blow the blasts," they cried, "and call us as they blow."

In such a night—and then the heroes told
What had been done in better times of old;
How they had conquer'd all opposed to them,
By force in part, in part by stratagem;
And as the tales inflamed the fiery crew,
What had been done they then prepared to do;
"'T is a last night!" they said—the angry blast
And roaring floods seem'd answering, "'T is a last!"

James knew they met, for he had spies about,
Grave, sober men, whom none presumed to doubt!
For if suspected, they had soon been tried
Where fears are evidence, and doubts decide:
But these escaped.—Now James companions took,
Sturdy and bold, with terror-stirring look:
He had before, by informations led,
Left the afflicted partner of his bed;
Awaked his men, and through plantations wide,
Deep woods, and trackless ling, had been their guide:
And then return'd to wake the pitying wife,
And hear her tender terrors for his life.

But in this night a sure informer came,—
They were assembled who attack'd his game;
Who more than once had through the park made way,
And slain the dappled breed, or vow'd to slay;
The trembling spy had heard the solemn vow,
And need and vengeance both inspired them now.

The keeper early had retired to rest
For brief repose; sad thoughts his mind possess'd:
In his short sleep he started from his bed,
And ask'd in fancy's terror, "Is he dead?"
There was a call below, when James awoke,
Rose from his bed, and arms to aid him took,
Not all defensive!—there his helpers stood,
Arm'd like himself, and hastening to the wood.

"Why this?" he said; for Rachel pour'd her tears
Profuse, that spoke involuntary fears:
"Sleep, that so early thou for us mayst wake,
"And we our comforts in return may take;
"Sleep, and farewell!" he said, and took his way,
And the sad wife in neither could obey;
She slept not nor well fared, but restless dwelt
On her past life, and past afflictions felt;
The man she loved, the brother and the foe
Of him she married!—It had wrought her woe;
Not that she loved, but pitied, and that now
Was, so she fear'd, infringement of her vow:
James too was civil, though she must confess
That his was not her kind of happiness:
That he would shoot the man who shot a hare,
Was what her timid conscience could not bear;
But still she loved him—wonder'd where he stray'd
In this loud night, and if he were afraid.

More than one hour she thought, and, dropping then
In sudden sleep, cried loudly, "Spare him, men!
"And do no murder!"—then awaked she rose,
And thought no more of trying for repose.

'Twas past the dead of night, when every sound
That nature mingles might be heard around;
But none from man,—man's feeble voice was hush'd,
Where rivers swelling roar'd, and woods were crush'd;
Hurried by these, the wife could sit no more,
But must the terrors of the night explore.

Softly she left her door, her garden gate,
And seem'd as then committed to her fate:
To every horrid thought and doubt a prey,
She hurried on, already lost her way:
Oft as she glided on in that sad night,
She stopp'd to listen, and she look'd for light;
An hour she wander'd, and was still to learn
Aught of her husband's safety or return:
A sudden break of heavy clouds could show
A place she knew not, but she strove to know:
Still further on she crept with trembling feet,
With hope a friend, with fear a foe to meet;
And there was something fearful in the sight
And in the sound of what appear'd to-night;
For now, of night and nervous terror bred,
Arose a strong and superstitious dread;
She heard strange noises, and the shapes she saw
Of fancied beings bound her soul in awe.

The moon was risen, and she sometimes shone
Through thick white clouds, that flew tumultuous on,
Passing beneath her with an eagle's speed,
That her soft light imprison'd and then freed:
The fitful glimmering through the hedge-row green
Gave a strange beauty to the changing scene;
And roaring winds and rushing waters lent
Their mingled voice that to the spirit went.

To these she listen'd; but new sounds were heard,
And sight more startling to her soul appear'd;
There were low lengthen'd tones with sobs between,
And near at hand, but nothing yet was seen;
She hurried on, and "Who is there?" she cried,—
"A dying wretch!" was from the earth replied.

It was her lover—was the man she gave,
The price she paid, himself from death to save;
With whom, expiring, she must kneel and pray,
While the soul flitted from the shivering clay
That press'd the dewy ground, and bled its life away!
This was the part that duty bade her take,
Instant and ere her feelings were awake;
But now they waked to anguish: there came then,
Hurrying with lights, loud-speaking, eager men.

"And here, my lord, we met—And who is here?
"The keeper's wife!—Ah! woman, go not near!
"There lies the man that was the head of all—
"See, in his temples went the fatal ball!
"And James that instant, who was then our guide,
"Felt in his heart the adverse shot, and died!
"It was a sudden meeting, and the light
"Of a dull moon made indistinct our fight;
"He foremost fell!—But see, the woman creeps
"Like a lost thing, that wanders as she sleeps.
"See, here her husband's body—but she knows
"That other dead, and that her action shows.
"Rachel! why look you at your mortal foe?—
"She does not hear us—Whither will she go?"

Now, more attentive, on the dead they gazed,
And they were brothers: sorrowing and amazed,
On all a momentary silence came,
A common softness, and a moral shame.

"Seized you the poachers?" said my lord.—
"They fled,
"And we pursued not,—one of them was dead,
"And one of us: they hurried through the wood,
"Two lives were gone, and we no more pursued.
"Two lives of men, of valiant brothers, lost!
"Enough, my lord, do hares and pheasants cost!"

So many thought, and there is found a heart
To dwell upon the deaths on either part;
Since this their morals have been more correct,
The cruel spirit in the place is check'd;
His lordship holds not in such sacred care,
Nor takes such dreadful vengeance for a hare;
The smugglers fear, the poacher stands in awe
Of Heaven's own act, and reverence the law;
There was, there is, a terror in the place
That operates on man's offending race;
Such acts will stamp their moral on the soul,
And, while the bad they threaten and control,
Will to the pious and the humble say,
Yours is the right, the safe, the certain way;
'T is wisdom to be good, 't is virtue to obey.

So Rachel thinks, the pure, the good, the meek,
Whose outward acts the inward purpose speak;
As men will children at their sports behold,
And smile to see them, though unmoved and cold,
Smile at the recollected games, and then
Depart and mix in the affairs of men:

So Rachel looks upon the world, and sees
It cannot longer pain her, longer please,
But just detain the passing thought, or cause
A gentle smile of pity or applause;
And then the recollected soul repairs
Her slumbering hope, and heeds her own affairs.[1]

BOOK XXII.

THE VISIT CONCLUDED.

Richard prepares to depart—Visits the Rector—His Reception—Visit to the Sisters—Their present Situation—The Morning of the last Day—The Conference of the Brothers—Their Excursion—Richard dissatisfied—The Brother expostulates—The End of their Ride, and of the Day's Business—Conclusion.

"No letters, Tom?" said Richard—"None to-day."
"Excuse me, Brother, I must now away;
"Matilda never in her life so long
"Deferr'd—Alas! there must be something wrong!"

"Comfort!" said George, and all he could he lent;
"Wait till your promised day, and I consent;
"Two days, and those of hope, may cheerfully be spent.

"And keep your purpose, to review the place,
"My choice; and I beseech you do it grace:
"Mark each apartment, their proportions learn,
"And either use or elegance discern;
"Look o'er the land, the gardens, and their wall,
"Find out the something to admire in all;
"And should you praise them in a knowing style,
"I'll take it kindly:—it is well—a smile."

Richard must now his morning visits pay,
And bid farewell! for he must go away.

He sought the Rector first, not lately seen,
For he had absent from his parish been:
"Farewell!" the younger man with feeling cried;
"Farewell!" the cold but worthy priest replied;
"When do you leave us?"—"I have days but two."
"'T is a short time—but, well—adieu, adieu!"

"Now here is one," said Richard, as he went
To the next friend in pensive discontent,
"With whom I sat in social, friendly ease,
"Whom I respected, whom I wish'd to please;
"Whose love profess'd I question'd not was true,
"And now to hear his heartless, 'Well, adieu!'

"But 't is not well—and he a man of sense,
"Grave, but yet looking strong benevolence;
"Whose slight acerbity and roughness told
"To his advantage; yet the man is cold:
"Nor will he know, when rising in the morn,
"That such a being to the world was born.

"Are such the friendships we contract in life?
"Oh! give me then the friendship of a wife!
"Adieus, nay, parting-pains, to us are sweet,
"They make so glad the moments when we meet:
"For though we look not for regard intense,
"Or warm professions in a man of sense,
"Yet in the daily intercourse of mind
"I thought that found which I desired to find,
"Feeling and frankness—thus it seem'd to me,
"And such farewell!—Well, Rector, let it be!"

Of the fair Sisters then he took his leave,—
Forget he could not, he must think and grieve,—
Must the impression of their wrongs retain,
Their very patience adding to his pain;
And still the better they their sorrows bore,
His friendly nature made him feel them more.

He judged they must have many a heavy hour
When the mind suffers from a want of power;

[1] ["The story of Rachel is a frightful one. She was courted by two brothers, one of whom was a poacher, and one a gamekeeper. She loves the poacher; but his irregularities put his life in danger from the law; while his rival brother, who is the prosecutor, makes her marriage with him the condition of his forbearance. The devoted woman consults her imprisoned lover, in a scene that will almost bear a comparison with that between Isabella and Claudio; and he, like Claudio, submits to purchase his life by that terrible sacrifice—

'Farewell! she cried, with kindness, but not fond—
'And put her tenderness apart, to give
'Advice to one who so desired to live.'

The advice and the sacrifice are both in vain: the outlaw returns to his guilty practices, and the brothers fall by each other's hands in a midnight encounter, and are found bleeding by their distracted victim. The epilogue is mild and solemn, and in perfect harmony with the whole strain of the fable."—JEFFREY.

The subject of 'Smugglers and Poachers,' was suggested to Mr. Crabbe by Sir Samuel Romilly, on the 10th of September, 1818. Sir Samuel died on the 30th of October; and on the blank leaf, at the end of the MS. of this Tale, appear the following verses, dated Hampstead, November 6, 1818:—

"Thus had I written, so a friend advised,
Whom as the first of counsellors I prized,
The best of guides to my assuming pen,
The best of fathers, husbands, judges, men.
'This will he read,' I said, 'and I shall hear
Opinion wise, instructive, mild, sincere,
For I that mind respect, for I the man revere.'

"I had no boding fear, but thought to see
Those who were thine, who look'd for all to thee;
And thou wert all! there was, when thou wert by,
Diffused around the rare felicity
That wisdom, worth, and kindness can impart,
To form the mind and gratify the heart.

"Yes! I was proud to speak of thee, as one
Who had approved the little I had done,
And taught me what I should do!—Thou wouldst raise
My doubting spirit by a smile of praise,
And words of comfort! great was thy delight
Fear to expel, and ardour to excite,
To wrest th' oppressor's arm, and do the injured right.

"Thou hadst the tear for pity, and thy breast
Felt for the sad, the weary, the oppress'd!
And now, afflicting change! all join with me,
And feel, lamented ROMILLY, for thee."]

When, troubled long, we find our strength decay'd,
And cannot then recall our better aid;
For to the mind, ere yet that aid has flown,
Grief has possess'd, and made it all his own;
And patience suffers, till, with gather'd might,
The scatter'd forces of the soul unite.

But few and short such times of suffering were
In Lucy's mind, and brief the reign of care.
Jane had, indeed, her flights, but had in them
What we could pity, but must not condemn;
For they were always pure, and oft sublime,
And such as triumph'd over earth and time,
Thoughts of eternal love that souls possess,
Foretaste divine of heaven's own happiness.

Oft had he seen them, and esteem had sprung
In his free mind for maids so sad and young,
So good and grieving, and his place was high
In their esteem, his friendly brother's nigh,
But yet beneath; and when he said adieu!
Their tone was kind, and was responsive too.

Parting was painful; when adieu he cried,
"You will return?" the gentle girls replied;
"You must return! your Brother knows you now,
"But to exist without you knows not how;
"Has he not told us of the lively joy
"He takes—forgive us—in the Brother-boy?
"He is alone and pensive; you can give
"Pleasure to one by whom a number live
"In daily comfort—sure for this you met,
"That for his debtors you might pay a debt:
"The poor are call'd ungrateful, but you still
"Will have their thanks for this—indeed you will."

Richard but little said, for he of late
Held with himself contention and debate.

"My Brother loves me, his regard I know;
"But will not such affection weary grow?
"He kindly says, 'Defer the parting day,'
"But yet may wish me in his heart away;
"Nothing but kindness I in him perceive,
"In me 't is kindness then to take my leave;
"Why should I grieve if he should weary be?
"There have been visiters who wearied me;
"He yet may love, and we may part in peace,
"Nay, in affection—novelty must cease—
"Man is but man; the thing he most desires
"Pleases awhile—then pleases not—then tires:
"George to his former habits and his friends
"Will now return—and so my visit ends."

Thus Richard communed with his heart; but still
He found opposed his reason and his will,
Found that his thoughts were busy in this train,
And he was striving to be calm in vain.

These thoughts were passing while he yet forbore
To leave the friends whom he might see no more.

Then came a chubby child and sought relief,
Sobbing in all the impotence of grief;
A full-fed girl she was, with ruddy cheek,
And features coarse, that grosser feelings speak,
To whom another miss, with passions strong,
And slender fist, had done some baby-wrong.
On Lucy's gentle mind had Barlow wrought
To teach this child, whom she had labouring taught
With unpaid love—this unproductive brain
Would little comprehend, and less retain.

A farmer's daughter, with redundant health,
And double Lucy's weight and Lucy's wealth,
Had won the man's regard, and he with her
Possess'd the treasure vulgar minds prefer;
A man of thrift, and thriving, he possess'd
What he esteem'd of earthly good the best;
And Lucy's well-stored mind had not a charm
For this true lover of the well-stock'd farm,
This slave to petty wealth and rustic toil,
This earth-devoted wooer of the soil:—
But she with meekness took the wayward child,
And sought to make the savage nature mild.

But Jane her judgment with decision gave—
"Train not an idiot to oblige a slave."

And where is Bloomer? Richard would have said,
But he was cautious, feeling, and afraid;
And little either of the hero knew,
And little sought—he might be married too.

Now to his home, the morning visits past,
Return'd the guest—that evening was his last.
He met his Brother, and they spoke of those
From whom his comforts in the village rose;
Spoke of the favourites, whom so good and kind
It was peculiar happiness to find:
Then for the sisters in their griefs they felt,
And, sad themselves, on saddening subjects dwelt.

But George was willing all this woe to spare,
And let to-morrow be to-morrow's care:
He of his purchase talk'd—a thing of course,
As men will boldly praise a new-bought horse.
Richard was not to all its beauty blind,
And promised still to seek, with hope to find:
"The price indeed——"
"Yes, that," said George, "is high;
"But if I bought not, one was sure to buy,
"Who might the social comforts we enjoy,
"And every comfort, lessen or destroy.

"We must not always reckon what we give,
"But think how precious 't is in peace to live;
"Some neighbour Nimrod might in very pride
"Have stirr'd my anger, and have then defied;
"Or worse, have loved, and teased me to excess
"By his kind care to give me happiness;
"Or might his lady and her daughters bring,
"To raise my spirits, to converse, and sing:
"'T was not the benefit alone I view'd,
"But thought what horrid things I might exclude.

"Some party man might here have sat him down,
"Some country champion, railing at the crown,

" Or some true courtier, both prepared to prove,
" Who loved not them, could not their country love:
" If we have value for our health and ease,
" Should we not buy off enemies like these?"

So pass'd the evening in a quiet way,
When, lo! the morning of the parting day.

Each to the table went with clouded look,
And George in silence gazed upon a book;
Something that chance had offer'd to his view,—
He knew not what, or cared not, if he knew.

Richard his hand upon a paper laid,—
His vacant eye upon the carpet stray'd;
His tongue was talking something of the day,
And his vex'd mind was wandering on his way.

They spake by fits,—but neither had concern
In the replies,—they nothing wish'd to learn,
Nor to relate; each sat as one who tries
To baffle sadnesses and sympathies:
Each of his Brother took a steady view,—
As actor he, and as observer too.

Richard, whose heart was ever free and frank,
Had now a trial, and before it sank:
He thought his Brother—parting now so near—
Appear'd not as his Brother should appear;
He could as much of tenderness remark
When parting for a ramble in the park.

" Yet, is it just?" he thought; " and would I see
" My Brother wretched but to part with me?
" What can he further in my mind explore?
" He saw enough, and he would see no more:
" Happy himself, he wishes now to slide
" Back to his habits—He is satisfied;
" But I am not—this cannot be denied.
" He has been kind,—so let me think him still;
" Yet he expresses not a wish, a will
" To meet again!"—And thus affection strove
With pride, and petulance made war on love:
He thought his Brother cool—he knew him kind—
And there was sore division in his mind.

" Hours yet remain,—'t is misery to sit
" With minds for conversation all unfit;
" No evil can from change of place arise,
" And good will spring from air and exercise:
" Suppose I take the purposed ride with you,
" And guide your jaded praise to objects new,
" That buyers see?"—
And Richard gave assent
Without resistance, and without intent:
He liked not nor declined,—and forth the Brothers went.
" Come, my dear Richard! let us cast away
" All evil thoughts,—let us forget the day,
" And fight like men with grief till we like boys are gay."

Thus George,—and even this in Richard's mind
Was judged an effort rather wise than kind;
This flow'd from something he observed of late,
And he could feel it, but he could not state:
He thought some change appear'd,—yet fail'd to prove,
Even as he tried, abatement in the love;
But in his Brother's manner was restraint
That he could feel, and yet he could not paint.

That they should part in peace full well he knew,
But much he fear'd to part with coolness too:
George had been peevish when the subject rose,
And never fail'd the parting to oppose;
Name it, and straight his features cloudy grew
To stop the journey, as the clouds will do;—
And thus they rode along in pensive mood,
Their thoughts pursuing, by their cares pursued.

" Richard," said George, " I see it is in vain
" By love or prayer my Brother to retain;
" And, truth to tell, it was a foolish thing
" A man like thee from thy repose to bring
" Ours to disturb.—Say, how am I to live
" Without the comforts thou art wont to give?
" How will the heavy hours my mind afflict,—
" No one t' agree, no one to contradict,
" None to awake, excite me, or prevent,
" To hear a tale, or hold an argument,
" To help my worship in a case of doubt,
" And bring me in my blunders fairly out!
" Who now by manners lively or serene
" Comes between me and sorrow like a screen,
" And giving, what I look'd not to have found,
" A care, an interest in the world around?"

Silent was Richard, striving to adjust
His thoughts for speech,—for speak, he thought, he must:
Something like war within his bosom strove—
His mild, kind nature, and his proud self-love:
Grateful he was, and, with his courage, meek,—
But he was hurt, and he resolved to speak.

" Yes, my dear Brother! from my soul I grieve
" Thee and the proofs of thy regard to leave;
" Thou hast been all that I could wish,—my pride
" Exults to find that I am thus allied:
" Yet to express a feeling, how it came,
" The pain it gives, its nature and its name,
" I know not,—but of late, I will confess,
" Not that thy love is little, but is less.

" Hadst thou received me in thy present mood,
" Sure I had held thee to be kind and good;
" But thou wert all the warmest heart could state,
" Affection dream, or hope anticipate:
" I must have wearied thee, yet day by day,—
" 'Stay!' said my Brother, and 't was good to stay;
" But now, forgive me, thinking I perceive
" Change undefined, and as I think I grieve.

" Have I offended?—Proud although I be,
" I will be humble and concede to thee:
" Have I intruded on thee when thy mind
" Was vex'd, and then to solitude inclined?
" Oh! there are times when all things will molest
" Minds so disposed, so heavy, so oppress'd;

" And thine, I know, is delicate and nice,
" Sickening at folly, and at war with vice:
" Then, at a time when thou wert vex'd with these,
" I have intruded, let affection tease,
" And so offended."
" Richard, if thou hast,
" 'T is at this instant, nothing in the past:
" No! thou art all a Brother's love would choose;
" And, having lost thee, I shall interest lose
" In all that I possess: I pray thee tell
" Wherein thy host has fail'd to please thee well,—
" Do I neglect thy comforts?"
" Oh! not thou,
" But art thyself uncomfortable now,
" And 't is from thee and from thy looks I gain
" This painful knowledge—'t is my Brother's pain;
" And yet, that something in my spirit lives,
" Something that spleen excites and sorrow gives,
" I may confess,—for not in thee I trace
" Alone this change, it is in all the place:
" Smile if thou wilt in scorn, for I am glad
" A smile at any rate is to be had.

" But there is Jacques, who ever seem'd to treat
" Thy Brother kindly as we chanced to meet;
" Nor with thee only pleased our worthy guide,
" But in the hedge-row path and green-wood side,
" There he would speak with that familiar ease
" That makes a trifle, makes a nothing please.

" But now to my farewell,—and that I spoke
" With honest sorrow,—with a careless look,
" Gazing unalter'd on some stupid prose—
" His sermon for the Sunday I suppose,—
" ' Going?' said he: ' why, then the Squire and you
" ' Will part at last—You 're going? Well, adieu!'

" True, we were not in friendship bound like those
" Who will adopt each other's friends and foes,
" Without esteem or hatred of their own,—
" But still we were to intimacy grown;
" And sure of Jacques when I had taken leave
" It would have grieved me, and it ought to grieve;
" But I in him could not affection trace,—
" Careless he put his sermons in their place,
" With no more feeling than his sermon-case.

" Not so those generous Girls beyond the brook,—
" It quite unmann'd me as my leave I took.

" But, my dear Brother! when I take at night,
" In my own home, and in their mother's sight,
" By turns my children, or together see
" A pair contending for the vacant knee,—
" When to Matilda I begin to tell
" What in my visit first and last befel—
" Of this your village, of her tower and spire,
" And, above all, her Rector and her Squire,—
" How will the tale be marr'd when I shall end—
" I left displeased the Brother and the Friend!"

" Nay, Jacques is honest—Marry, he was then
" Engaged—What! part an author and his pen?
" Just in the fit, and when th' inspiring ray
" Shot on his brain, t' arrest it in its way!
" Come, thou shalt see him in an easier vein,
" Nor of his looks nor of his words complain:
" Art thou content?"
If Richard had replied,
" I am," his manner had his words belied:
Even from his Brother's cheerfulness he drew
Something to vex him—what, he scarcely knew:
So he evading said, " My evil fate
" Upon my comforts throws a gloom of late:
" Matilda writes not; and, when last she wrote,
" I read no letter—'t was a trader's note,—
" ' Yours I received,' and all that formal prate
" That is so hateful—that she knows I hate.

" Dejection reigns, I feel, but cannot tell
" Why upon me the dire infection fell:
" Madmen may say that they alone are sane,
" And all beside have a distemper'd brain;
" Something like this I feel,—and I include
" Myself among the frantic multitude:
" But come, Matilda writes, although but ill,
" And home has health, and that is comfort still."

George stopp'd his horse, and with the kindest look
Spoke to his Brother,—earnestly he spoke,
As one who to his friend his heart reveals,
And all the hazard with the comfort feels.

" Soon as I loved thee, Richard,—and I loved
" Before my reason had the will approved,
" Who yet right early had her sanction lent,
" And with affection in her verdict went,—
" So soon I felt, that thus a friend to gain,
" And then to lose, is but to purchase pain:
" Daily the pleasure grew, then sad the day
" That takes it all in its increase away!

" Patient thou wert, and kind,—but well I knew
" The husband's wishes, and the father's too;
" I saw how check'd they were, and yet in secret grew;
" Once and again, I urged thee to delay
" Thy purposed journey, still deferr'd the day,
" And still on its approach the pain increased,
" Till my request and thy compliance ceased;
" I could not further thy affection task,
" Nor more of one so self-resisting ask;
" But yet to lose thee, Richard, and with thee
" All hope of social joys—it cannot be.
" Nor could I bear to meet thee as a boy
" From school his parents, to obtain a joy
" That lessens day by day, and one will soon destroy.

" No! I would have thee, Brother, all my own,
" To grow beside me as my trees have grown;
" For ever near me, pleasant in my sight,
" And in my mind, my pride and my delight.

" Yet will I tell thee, Richard; had I found
" Thy mind dependent and thy heart unsound,
" Hadst thou been poor, obsequious, and disposed
" With any wish or measure to have closed,
" Willing on me and gladly to attend,
" The younger brother, the convenient friend,

" Thy speculation its reward had made
" Like other ventures,—thou hadst gain'd in trade;
" What reason urged, or Jacques esteem'd thy due,
" Thine had it been, and I, a trader too,
" Had paid my debt, and home my Brother sent,
" Nor glad nor sorry that he came or went;
" Who to his wife and children would have told,
" They had an uncle, and the man was old;
" Till every girl and boy had learn'd to prate
" Of Uncle George, his gout, and his estate.
" Thus had we parted; but as now thou art,
" I must not lose thee—No! I cannot part;
" Is it in human nature to consent
" To give up all the good that Heaven has lent,
" All social ease and comfort to forego,
" And live again the solitary? No!

" We part no more, dear Richard! thou wilt need
" Thy Brother's help to teach thy boys to read;
" And I should love to hear Matilda's psalm,
" To keep my spirit in a morning calm,
" And feel the soft devotion that prepares
" The soul to rise above its earthly cares;
" Then thou and I, an independent two,
" May have our parties, and defend them too;
" Thy liberal notions, and my loyal fears,
" Will give us subjects for our future years;
" We will for truth alone contend and read,
" And our good Jacques shall oversee our creed.

" Such were my views; and I had quickly made
" Some bold attempts my Brother to persuade
" To think as I did; but I knew too well
" Whose now thou wert, with whom thou wert to dwell:
" And why, I said, return him doubtful home,
" Six months to argue if he then would come
" Some six months after? and, beside, I know
" That all the happy are of course the slow;
" And thou at home art happy, there wilt stay,
" Dallying 'twixt will and will-not many a day,
" And fret the gloss of hope, and hope itself away.

" Jacques is my friend; to him I gave my heart,—
" 'You see my Brother, see I would not part;
" 'Wilt thou an embassy of love disdain?
" 'Go to this sister, and my views explain;—
" 'Gloss o'er my failings; paint me with a grace
" 'That Love beholds; put meaning in my face;
" 'Describe that dwelling; talk how well we live,
" 'And all its glory to our village give;
" 'Praise the kind Sisters whom we love so much,
" 'And thine own virtues like an artist touch.

" 'Tell her, and here my secret purpose show,
" 'That no dependence shall my sister know;
" 'Hers all the freedom that she loves shall be,
" 'And mine the debt,—then press her to agree;
" 'Say, that my Brother's wishes wait on hers,
" 'And his affection what she wills prefers.'

" Forgive me, Brother,—these my words and more
" Our friendly Rector to Matilda bore;
" At large, at length, were all my views explain'd,
" And to my joy my wishes I obtain'd.

" Dwell in that house, and we shall still be near,
" Absence and parting I no more shall fear;
" Dwell in thy home, and at thy will exclude
" All who shall dare upon thee to intrude.

" Again thy pardon,—'twas not my design
" To give surprise; a better view was mine;
" But let it pass—and yet I wish'd to see
" That meeting too: and happy may it be!"

Thus George had spoken, and then look'd around,
And smiled as one who then his road had found;
" Follow!" he cried, and briskly urged his horse:
Richard was puzzled, but obey'd of course;
He was affected like a man astray,
Lost, but yet knowing something of the way;
Till a wood clear'd, that still conceal'd the view,
Richard the purchase of his Brother knew;
And something flash'd upon his mind not clear,
But much with pleasure mix'd, in part with fear;
As one who, wandering through a stormy night,
Sees his own home, and gladdens at the sight,
Yet feels some doubt if fortune had decreed
That lively pleasure in such time of need:
So Richard felt—but now the mansion came
In view direct,—he knew it for the same;
There too the garden walk, the elms design'd
To guard the peaches from the eastern wind;
And there the sloping glass, that when he shines
Gives the sun's vigour to the ripening vines.

" It is my Brother's!"—
" No!" he answers, " No!
" 'T is to thy own possession that we go;
" It is thy wife's, and will thy children's be,
" Earth, wood, and water!—all for thine and thee;
" Bought in thy name.—Alight, my friend, and come,
" I do beseech thee, to thy proper home;
" There wilt thou soon thy own Matilda view—
" She knows our deed, and she approves it too;
" Before her all our views and plans were laid,
" And Jacques was there to explain and to persuade.
" Here, on this lawn, thy boys and girls shall run,
" And play their gambols when their tasks are done;
" There, from that window, shall their mother view
" The happy tribe, and smile at all they do;
" While thou, more gravely, hiding thy delight,
" Shalt cry, 'O! childish!' and enjoy the sight.

"Well, my dear Richard, there's no more to say—
"Stay as you will—do anything—but stay;
"Be, I dispute not, steward—what you will,
"Take your own name, but be my Brother still.

"And hear me, Richard! if I should offend,
"Assume the patron and forget the friend;
"If aught in word or manner I express
"That only touches on thy happiness;
"If I be peevish, humoursome, unkind,
"Spoil'd as I am by each subservient mind,—
"For I am humour'd by a tribe who make
"Me more capricious for the pains they take
"To make me quiet; shouldst thou ever feel
"A wound from this, this leave not time to heal,
"But let thy wife her cheerful smile withhold;
"Let her be civil, distant, cautious, cold:
"Then shall I woo forgiveness, and repent,
"Nor bear to lose the blessings Heaven has lent."

But this was needless—there was joy of heart,
All felt the good that all desired t' impart;
Respect, affection, and esteem combined,
In sundry portions ruled in every mind;
And o'er the whole an unobtrusive air
Of pious joy, that urged the silent prayer,
And bless'd the new-born feelings.——Here we close
Our Tale of Tales!—Health, reader, and repose![1]

[1] ["The present work is marked with all the characteristics that we noticed as distinctive of Mr. Crabbe's poetry. On the whole, however, it has certainly fewer of the grosser faults: there is far less that is horrible; and the picture which is afforded of society and human nature is, on the whole, much less painful and degrading. There is both less misery and less guilt; and, while the same searching and unsparing glance is sent into all the dark caverns of the breast, and the truth brought forth with the same stern impartiality, the result is more comfortable and cheering. The greater part of the characters are rather more elevated in station, and milder and more amiable in disposition; while the accidents of life are more mercifully managed, and fortunate circumstances more liberally allowed. It is rather remarkable, too, that Mr. Crabbe seems to become more amatory as he grows older; the interest of almost all the stories in this collection turning on the tender passion, and many of them on its most romantic varieties."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1819.

"We cannot bid Mr. Crabbe farewell, for the present, without observing, with real delight, that, while old age has not at all impaired the vigour of his intellect, or blunted the acuteness of his observation, it seems to have mellowed and softened his feelings, just to the degree that his best friends may have once thought desirable; and that, while he still looks on human life with the same philosophic eye, and spares none of its follies or its vices, he thinks of it with somewhat of a gentler and more pitying spirit, as of one who has well understood it all, and who looks back upon its agitations and its guilt as on a troubled and unintelligible scene, from which, in the course of nature, he may soon be removed, in the strength of that trust which can only be inspired by that religion of which he has so long been a conscientious minister."—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1819.]

POSTHUMOUS TALES.

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

SIR,

IT is our belief that, in respectfully inscribing to you these POSTHUMOUS TALES, we select the name which, if our Father had himself superintended their Publication, he would have been most ambitious to connect with them.

We have the honour to be, SIR,
Your grateful and faithful
Humble Servants,

GEORGE CRABBE.
JOHN CRABBE.

August, 1834.

ADVERTISEMENT.

ALTHOUGH, in a letter written shortly before his death, Mr. CRABBE mentioned the following pieces as fully prepared for the press, and to withhold from the public what he had thus described could not have been consistent with filial reverence; yet his executors must confess that, when they saw the first pages of his MS. reduced to type, they became very sensible that, had he himself lived to edit these compositions, he would have considered it necessary to bestow on them a good deal more of revision and correction before finally submitting them to the eye of the world. They perceived that his language had not always effected the complete development of his ideas; that images were here and there left imperfect—nay, trains of reflection rather hinted than expressed; and that, in many places, thoughts in themselves valuable could not have failed to derive much additional weight and point from the last touches of his own pen.

Under such circumstances, it was a very great relief to their minds to learn that several persons of the highest eminence in literature had read these poetical Remains before any part of them was committed to the printer; and that the verdict of such judges was, on the whole, more favourable than they themselves had begun to anticipate:—that, in the opinion of those whose esteem had formed the highest honour of their father's life, his fame would not be tarnished by their compliance with the terms of his literary bequest: that, though not so uniformly polished as some of his previous performances, these Posthumous Essays would still be found to preserve, in the main, the same characteristics on which his reputation had been established; much of the same quiet humour and keen observation; the same brief and vivid description; the same unobtrusive pathos; the same prevailing reverence for moral truth and rational religion; and, in a word, not a few "things which the world would not willingly let die."

The following verses are therefore at length submitted to the public; not indeed without deep anxiety, but still with some considerable hope that they may be received with a fair portion of favour now, and allowed to descend to posterity as not, on the whole, unworthy of a place in their Author's collective works.

POSTHUMOUS TALES.

TALE I.

SILFORD HALL; OR, THE HAPPY DAY.

Within a village, many a mile from town,
A place of small resort and no renown;—
Save that it form'd a way and ghve a name
To Silford Hall, it made no claim to fame;—
It was the gain of some, the pride of all,
That travellers stopp'd to ask for Silford Hall.

Small as it was, the place could boast a School,
In which *Nathaniel Perkin* bore the rule.
Not mark'd for learning deep, or talents rare,
But for his varying tasks and ceaseless care:
Some forty boys, the sons of thrifty men,
He taught to read, and part to use the pen;
While, by more studious care, a favourite few
Increased his pride—for if the Scholar knew
Enough for praise, say what the Teacher's due?—
These to his presence, slates in hand, moved on,
And a grim smile their feats in figures won.

This Man of Letters woo'd in early life
The Vicar's maiden, whom he made his wife.
She too can read, as by her song she proves—
The song Nathaniel made about their loves:
Five rosy girls and one fair boy increased
The Father's care, whose labours seldom ceased.
No day of rest was his. If, now and then,
His boys for play laid by the book and pen,
For Lawyer Slow there was some deed to write,
Or some young farmer's letter to indite,
Or land to measure, or, with legal skill,
To frame some yeoman's widow's peevish will;
And on the Sabbath, when his neighbours dress'd,
To hear their duties and to take their rest—
Then, when the Vicar's periods ceased to flow,
Was heard Nathaniel, in his seat below.

Such were his labours; but the time is come
When his son *Peter* clears the hours of gloom,
And brings him aid: though yet a boy, he shares
In staid Nathaniel's multifarious cares.
A king his father, he, a prince, has rule—
The first of subjects, viceroy of the school:
But though a prince within that realm he reigns,
Hard is the part his duteous soul sustains.

He with his father, o'er the furrow'd land,
Draws the long chain in his uneasy hand,
And neatly forms at home, what there they rudely
plann'd.
Content, for all his labour if he gains
Some words of praise, and sixpence for his pains.
Thus many a hungry day the Boy has fared,
And would have ask'd a dinner had he dared.
When boys are playing, he for hours of school
Has sums to set, and copy-books to rule:
When all are met, for some sad dunce afraid,
He, by allowance, lends his timely aid—
Taught at the student's failings to connive,
Yet keep his father's dignity alive:
For e'en Nathaniel fears, and might offend,
If too severe, the farmer, now his friend;
Or her, that farmer's lady, who well knows
Her boy is bright, and needs nor threats nor blows.
This seem'd to Peter hard; and he was loth
To obey and rule, and have the cares of both—
To miss the master's dignity, and yet
No portion of the schoolboy's play to get.
To him the Fiend, as once to Launcelot, cried,
"Run from thy wrongs;"—"Run where?" his
fear replied:
"Run," said the Tempter; "if but hard thy fare,
"Hard is it now—it *may* be mended there."

But still, though tempted, he refused to part,
And felt the mother clinging at his heart.
Nor this alone—he in that weight of care
Had help, and bore it as a man should bear.
A drop of comfort in his cup was thrown;
It was his treasure, and it was his own.
His father's shelves contained a motley store
Of letter'd wealth; and this he might explore.
A part his mother in her youth had gain'd,
A part Nathaniel from his club obtain'd,
And part—a well-worn kind—from sire to son
remain'd.

He sought his Mother's hoard, and there he
found
Romance in sheets, and poetry unbound:
Soft Tales of Love, which never damsel read
But tears of pity stain'd her virgin bed.
There were Jane Shore and Rosamond the Fair;
And humbler heroines frail as these were there;
There was a tale of one forsaken Maid,
Who till her death the work of vengeance stay'd;

Her lover then at sea, while round him stood
A dauntless crew, the angry ghost pursued:
In a small boat, without an oar or sail,
She came to call him, nor would force avail,
Nor prayer; but, conscience-stricken, down he leapt,
And o'er his corse the closing billows slept;
All vanish'd then! but of the crew were some,
Wondering whose ghost would on the morrow come.

A learned Book was there, and in it schemes
How to cast Fortunes and interpret Dreams;
Ballads were there of Lover's bliss or bale,
The Kitchen Story, and the Nursery Tale.
His hungry mind disdain'd not humble food,
And read with relish keen of Robin Hood;
Of him, all-powerful made by magic gift,
And Giants slain—of mighty Hickerthrift;
Through Crusoe's Isle delighted had he stray'd;
Nocturnal visits had to witches paid,
Gliding through haunted scenes, enraptured and afraid.

A loftier shelf with real books was graced,
Bound or part bound, and ranged in comely taste;
Books of high mark, the mind's more solid food,
Which some might think the owner understood;
But Fluxions, Sections, Algebraic lore,
Our Peter left for others to explore,
And, quickly turning to a favourite kind,
Found what rejoiced him at his heart to find.

Sir Walter wrote not then, or He by whom
Such gain and glory to Sir Walter come—
That Fairy-Helper, by whose secret aid
Such views of life are to the world convey'd—
As inspiration known in after-times,
The sole assistant in his prose or rhymes.
But there were fictions wild that please the boy,
Which men, too, read, condemn, reject, enjoy—
Arabian Nights, and Persian Tales, were there,
One volume each, and both the worse for wear;
There, by Quarles' Emblems, Esop's Fables stood,
The coats in tatters, and the cuts in wood.
There, too, "The English History," by the pen
Of Doctor Cooke, and other learned men,
In numbers, sixpence each; by these was seen,
And highly prized, the Monthly Magazine;—
Not such as now will men of taste engage,
But the cold gleanings of a former age,
Scraps cut from sermons, scenes removed from plays,
With heads of heroes famed in Tyburn's palmy days.

The rest we pass—though Peter pass'd them not,
But here his cares and labours all forgot:
Stain'd, torn, and blotted every noble page,
Stood the chief poets of a former age,
And of the present; not their works complete,
But in such portions as on bulks we meet,
The refuse of the shops, thrown down upon the street.
There Shakspeare, Spenser, Milton found a place,
With some a nameless, some a shameless race,
Which many a weary walker resting reads,
And, pondering o'er the short relief, proceeds,
While others lingering pay the written sum,
Half loth, but longing for delight to come.

Of the Youth's morals we would something speak;
Taught by his Mother what to shun or seek:
She show'd the heavenly way, and in his youth
Press'd on his yielding mind the Gospel truth,
How weak is man, how much to ill inclined,
And where his help is placed, and how to find.
These words of weight sank deeply in his breast,
And awful Fear and holy Hope impress'd.
He shrank from vice, and at the startling view,
As from an adder in his path, withdrew.
All else was cheerful. Peter's easy mind
To the gay scenes of village-life inclined.
The lark that soaring sings his notes of joy
Was not more lively than th' awaken'd boy.
Yet oft with this a softening sadness dwelt,
While, feeling thus, he marvell'd why he felt.
"I am not sorry," said the Boy, "but still,
"The tear will drop—I wonder why it will!"

His books, his walks, his musing, morn and eve
Gave such impressions as such minds receive;
And with his moral and religious views
Wove the wild fancies of an Infant-Muse,
Inspiring thoughts that he could not express,
Obscure sublime! his secret happiness.
Oft would he strive for words, and oft begin
To frame in verse the views he had within;
But ever fail'd: for how can words explain
The unform'd ideas of a teeming brain?

Such was my Hero, whom I would portray
In one exploit—the Hero of a Day.

At six miles' distance from his native town
Stood Silford Hall, a seat of much renown—
Computed miles, such weary travellers ride
When they in chance wayfaring men confide.
Beauty and grandeur were within; around,
Lawn, wood, and water; the delicious ground
Had parks where deer disport, had fields where game abound.
Fruits of all tastes in spacious gardens grew;
And flowers of every scent and every hue,
That native in more favour'd climes arise,
Are here protected from th' inclement skies.

To this fair place, with mingled pride and shame,
This lad of learning without knowledge came—
Shame for his conscious ignorance, and pride
To this fair seat in this gay style to ride.

The cause that brought him was a small account,
His father's due, and he must take the amount,
And sign a stamp'd receipt! this done, he might
Look all around him, and enjoy the sight.

So far to walk was, in his mother's view,
More than her darling Peter ought to do;
Peter indeed knew more, but he would hide
His better knowledge, for he wish'd to ride:
So had his father's nag, a beast so small,
That, if he fell, he had not far to fall.

His fond and anxious mother in his best
Her darling child for the occasion dress'd:
All in his coat of green she clothed her boy,
And stood admiring with a mother's joy:
Large was it made and long, as meant to do
For Sunday-service when he older grew—
Not brought in daily use in one year's wear or two.
White was his waistcoat, and what else he wore
Had clothed the lamb or parent ewe before.
In all the mother show'd her care or skill;
A riband black she tied beneath his frill;
Gave him his stockings, white as driven snow,
And bad him heed the miry way below;
On the black varnish of the comely shoe
Shone the large buckle of a silvery hue.
Boots he had worn, had he such things possess'd—
But bootless grief!—he was full proudly dress'd;
Full proudly look'd, and light he was of heart,
When thus for Silford Hall prepared to start.

Nathaniel's self with joy the stripling eyed,
And gave a shilling with a father's pride;
Rules of politeness too with pomp he gave,
And show'd the lad how scholars should behave.

Ere yet he left her home, the Mother told—
For she had seen—what things he should behold.
There, she related, her young eyes had view'd
Stone figures shaped like naked flesh and blood,
Which, in the hall and up the gallery placed,
Were proofs, they told her, of a noble taste;
Nor she denied—but, in a public hall,
Her judgment taken, she had clothed them all.
There, too, were stationed, each upon its seat,
Half forms of men, without their hands and feet;
These and what more within that hall might be
She saw, and oh! how long'd her son to see!
Yet could he hope to view that noble place,
Who dared not look the porter in the face?

Forth went the pony, and the rider's knees
Cleaved to her sides—he did not ride with ease;
One hand a whip, and one a bridle held,
In case the pony falter'd or rebell'd.

The village boys beheld him as he pass'd,
And looks of envy on the hero cast;
But he was meek, nor let his pride appear,
Nay, truth to speak, he felt a sense of fear,
Lest the rude beast, unmindful of the rein,
Should take a fancy to turn back again.

He found, and wonder 't is he found, his way,—
The orders many that he must obey:
"Now to the right, then left, and now again
"Directly onward, through the winding lane;
"Then half-way o'er the common, by the mill,
"Turn from the cottage and ascend the hill,
"Then—spare the pony, boy! as you ascend—
"You see the Hall, and that 's your journey's end."

Yes, he succeeded, not remembering aught
Of this advice, but by his pony taught.
Soon as he doubted he the bridle threw
On the steed's neck, and said—"Remember you!"
For oft the creature had his father borne,
Sound on his way, and safe on his return.
So he succeeded, and the modest youth
Gave praise where praise had been assign'd by truth.

His business done,—for fortune led his way
To him whose office was such debts to pay,—
The farmer-bailiff, but he saw no more
Than a small room, with bare and oaken floor,
A desk with books thereon—he 'd seen such things before;
"Good day!" he said, but linger'd as he spoke
"Good day," and gazed about with serious look;
Then slowly moved, and then delay'd a while,
In dumb dismay which raised a lordly smile
In those who eyed him—then again moved on,
As all might see, unwilling to be gone.

While puzzled thus, and puzzling all about,
Involved, absorb'd, in some bewildering doubt,
A lady enter'd, Madam Johnson call'd,
Within whose presence stood the lad appall'd.
A learned Lady this, who knew the names
Of all the pictures in the golden frames;
Could every subject, every painter, tell,
And on their merits and their failures dwell;
And if perchance there was a slight mistake—
These the most knowing on such matters make.

"And what dost mean, my pretty lad?" she cried;
"Dost stay or go?"—He first for courage tried,
Then for fit words,—then boldly he replied,
That he would give a hundred pounds, if so
He had them, all about that house to go;
For he had heard that it contain'd such things
As never house could boast, except the king's.

The ruling Lady, smiling, said, "In truth
"Thou shalt behold them all, my pretty youth.
"Tom! first the creature to the stable lead,
"Let it be fed; and you, my child, must feed;
"For three good hours must pass e'er dinner come."—
"Supper," thought he, "she means, our time at home."

First was he feasted to his heart's content,
Then, all in rapture, with the Lady went;
Through rooms immense, and galleries wide and tall,
He walk'd entranced—he breathed in Silford Hall.

Now could he look on that delightful place,
The glorious dwelling of a princely race;
His vast delight was mixed with equal awe,
There was such magic in the things he saw.
Oft standing still, with open mouth and eyes,
Turn'd here and there, alarm'd as one who tries
T' escape from something strange, that would before him rise.
The wall would part, and beings without name
Would come—for such to his adventures came.
Hence undefined and solemn terror press'd
Upon his mind, and all his powers possess'd.
All he had read of magic, every charm,
Were he alone, might come and do him harm:

But his gaze rested on his friendly guide—
" I 'm safe," he thought, " so long as you abide."

In one large room was found a bed of state—
" And can they soundly sleep beneath such weight,
" Where they may figures in the night explore,
" Form'd by the dim light dancing on the floor
" From the far window; mirrors broad and high
" Doubling each terror to the anxious eye?—
" 'T is strange," thought Peter, " that such things produce
" No fear in *her*: but there is much in use."

On that reflecting brightness, passing by,
The boy one instant fix'd his restless eye—
And saw himself: he had before descried
His face in one his mother's store supplied;
But here he could his whole dimensions view,
From the pale forehead to the jet-black shoe.
Passing he look'd, and, looking, grieved to pass
From the fair figure smiling in the glass.
'T was so Narcissus saw the boy advance
In the dear fount, and met th' admiring glance
So loved—But, no! our happier boy admired,
Not the slim form, but what the form attired,—
The riband, shirt, and frill, all pure and clean,
The white ribb'd stockings, and the coat of green.

The Lady now appear'd to move away—
And this was threat'ning; for he dared not stay,
Lost and alone; but earnestly he pray'd—
" Oh! do not leave me—I am not afraid,
" But 't is so lonesome; I shall never find
" My way alone, no better than the blind."

The Matron kindly to the Boy replied,
" Trust in my promise, I will be thy guide."
Then to the Chapel moved the friendly pair,
And well for Peter that his guide was there!
Dim, silent, solemn was the scene—he felt
The cedar's power, that so unearthly smelt;
And then the stain'd, dark, narrow windows threw
Strange partial beams on pulpit, desk, and pew:
Upon the altar, glorious to behold,
Stood a vast pair of candlesticks in gold!
With candles tall, and large, and firm, and white,
Such as the halls of giant-kings would light.
There was an organ, too, but now unseen;
A long black curtain served it for a skreen;
Not so the clock, that both by night and day
Click'd the short moments as they pass'd away.

" Is this a church? and does the parson read "—
Said Peter—" here?—I mean a church indeed."—
" Indeed it is, or as a church is used,"
Was the reply,—and Peter deeply mused,
Not without awe. His sadness to dispel,
They sought the gallery, and then all was well.

Yet enter'd there, although so clear his mind
From every fear substantial and defined,
Yet there remain'd some touch of native fear—
Of something awful to the eye and ear—
A ghostly voice might sound—a ghost itself appear.

There noble pictures fill'd his mind with joy—
He gazed and thought, and was no more the boy;
And Madam heard him speak, with some surprise,
Of heroes known to him from histories.
He knew the actors in the deeds of old,—
He could the Roman marvels all unfold.
He to his guide a theme for wonder grew,
At once so little and so much he knew—
Little of what was passing every day,
And much of that which long had pass'd away;—
So like a man, and yet so like a child,
That his good friend stood wond'ring as she smiled.

The Scripture Pieces caused a serious awe,
And he with reverence look'd on all he saw;
His pious wonder he express'd aloud,
And at the Saviour Form devoutly bow'd.

Portraits he pass'd, admiring; but with pain
Turn'd from some objects, nor would look again.
He seem'd to think that something wrong was done,
When crimes were shown he blush'd to look upon.
Not so his guide—" What youth is *that*?" she cried,
" That handsome stripling at the lady's side;
" Can you inform me how the youth is named?"
He answer'd " *Joseph*;" but he look'd ashamed.
" Well, and what then? Had you been Joseph, boy!
" Would you have been so peevish and so coy?"
Our hero answer'd, with a glowing face,
" His mother told him he should pray for grace."
A transient cloud o'ercast the matron's brow;
She seem'd disposed to laugh, but knew not how;
Silent a while, then placid she appear'd—
" 'T is but a child," she thought, and all was clear'd.

No—laugh she could not; still the more she sought
To hide her thoughts, the more of his she caught.
A hundred times she had these pictures named,
And never felt perplex'd, disturb'd, ashamed;
Yet now the feelings of a lad so young
Call'd home her thoughts and paralysed her tongue.
She pass'd the offensive pictures silent by,
With one reflecting, self-reproving sigh;
Reasoning how habit will the mind entice
To approach and gaze upon the bounds of vice,
As men, by custom, from some cliff's vast height,
Look pleased, and make their danger their delight.

" Come, let us on!—See there a Flemish view,
" A Country Fair, and all as Nature true.
" See there the merry creatures, great and small,
" Engaged in drinking, gaming, dancing all,
" Fiddling or fighting—all in drunken joy!"—
" But is this Nature?" said the wondering Boy.

" Be sure it is! and those Banditti there—
" Observe the faces, forms, the eyes, the air:
" See rage, revenge, remorse, disdain, despair!"

" And is that Nature, too?" the stripling cried.—
" Corrupted Nature," said the serious guide.

She then display'd her knowledge.—" That, my dear,
" Is call'd a Titian, this a Guido here,
" And yon a Claude—you see that lovely light,
" So soft and solemn, neither day nor night."

" Yes!" quoth the Boy, " and there is just the breeze,
" That curls the water, and that fans the trees;
" The ships that anchor in that pleasant bay
" All look so safe and quiet—Claude, you say?"

On a small picture Peter gazed and stood
In admiration—" 't was so dearly good."
" For how much money think you, then, my lad,
" Is such a 'dear good picture' to be had?
" 'T is a famed master's work—a Gerard Dow,—
" At least the seller told the buyer so."

" I tell the price!" quoth Peter—" I as soon
" Could tell the price of pictures in the moon;
" But I have heard, when the great race was done,
" How much was offer'd for the horse that won."

" A thousand pounds: but, look the country round,
" And, may be, ten such horses might be found;
" While, ride or run where'er you choose to go,
" You 'll nowhere find so fine a Gerard Dow."

" If this be true," says Peter, " then, of course,
" You 'd rate the picture higher than the horse."

" Why, thou 'rt a reasoner, Boy!" the lady cried;
" But see that Infant on the other side;
" 'T is by Sir Joshua.[1] Did you ever see
" A babe so charming?"—" No, indeed," said he;
" I wonder how he could that look invent,
" That seems so sly, and yet so innocent!"

In this long room were various Statues seen,
And Peter gazed thereon with awe-struck mien.

" Why look so earnest, Boy?"—" Because they bring
" To me a story of an awful thing."
" Tell then thy story."——He, who never stay'd
For words or matter, instantly obey'd.

A holy pilgrim to a city sail'd,
" Where every sin o'er sinful men prevail'd;
" Who, when he landed, look'd in every street,
" As he was wont, a busy crowd to meet;
" But now of living beings found he none,
" Death had been there, and turn'd them all to stone;
" All in an instant, as they were employ'd,
" Was life in every living man destroy'd—
" The rich, the poor, the timid, and the bold,
" Made in a moment such as we behold."

[1] ["In the year 1783 Mr. Crabbe very frequently passed his mornings at the easel of Sir Joshua Reynolds, conversing on a variety of subjects, while this distinguished artist was employed upon that celebrated painting, then preparing for the Empress Catharine of Russia."—See *Life, antè*, p. 34.]

" Come, my good lad, you 've yet a room to see.
" Are you awake?"—" I am amazed," said he;
" I know they 're figures form'd by human skill,
" But 't is so awful, and this place so still!

" And what is this?" said Peter, who had seen
A long wide table, with its cloth of green,
Its net-work pockets, and its studs of gold—
For such they seem'd, and precious to behold.
There too were ivory balls, and one was red,
Laid with long sticks upon the soft green bed,
And printed tables, on the wall beside—
" Oh! what are these?" the wondering Peter cried.

" This, my good lad, is call'd the Billiard-room,"
Answer'd his guide; " and here the gentry come,
" And with these maces and these cues they play,
" At their spare time, or in a rainy day."

" And what this chequer'd box?—for play, I guess?"—
" You judge it right; 't is for the game of Chess.
" There! take your time, examine what you will,
" There's King, Queen, Knight,—it is a game of skill:
" And these are Bishops; you the difference see."
" What! do they make a game of *them*?" quoth he.—
" Bishops, like Kings," she said, " are here but names;
" Not that I answer for their Honours' games."

All round the house did Peter go, and found
Food for his wonder all the house around.
There guns of various bore, and rods and lines,
And all that man for deed of death designs,
In beast, or bird, or fish, or worm, or fly—
Life in these last must means of death supply;
The living bait is gorged, and both the victims die.
" God gives man leave his creatures to destroy."—
" What! for his sport?" replied the pitying Boy.
" Nay," said the Lady, " why the sport condemn?
" As die they must, 't is much the same to them."
Peter had doubts; but with so kind a friend
He would not on a dubious point contend.

Much had he seen, and everything he saw
Excited pleasure not unmix'd with awe.
Leaving each room, he turn'd as if once more
To enjoy the pleasure that he felt before.—
" What then must their possessors feel? how grand
" And happy they who can such joys command!
" For they may pleasures all their lives pursue,
" The winter pleasures, and the summer's too—
" Pleasures for every hour in every day—
" Oh! how their time must pass in joy away!"

So Peter said.—Replied the courteous Dame,
" What you call pleasure scarcely owns the name.
" The very changes of amusement prove
" There 's nothing that deserves a lasting love.
" They hunt, they course, they shoot, they fish, they game;
" The objects vary, though the end the same—

" A search for that which flies them; no, my Boy!
" 'T is not enjoyment, 't is pursuit of joy."

Peter was thoughtful — thinking, What! not these,
Who can command, or purchase what they please—
Whom many serve, who only speak the word,
And they have all that earth or seas afford—
All that can charm the mind and please the eye—
And *they* not happy!—but I 'll ask her why.

So Peter ask'd.—" 'T is not," she said, " for us
" Their Honours' inward feelings to discuss;
" But if they 're happy, they would still confess
" 'T is not these things that make their happiness.

" Look from this window! at his work behold
" Yon gard'ner's helper—he is poor and old;
" He not one thing of all you see can call
" His own; but, haply, he o'erlooks them all.
" Hear him! he whistles through his work, or stops
" But to admire his labours and his crops:
" To-day as every former day he fares,
" And for the morrow has nor doubts nor cares;
" Pious and cheerful, proud when he can please,
" Judge if Joe Tomkin wants such things as these!

" Come, let us forward!" and she walk'd in haste
To a large room, itself a work of taste,
But chiefly valued for the works that drew
The eyes of Peter—this indeed was new,
Was most imposing.—Books of every kind
Were there disposed, the food for every mind.
With joy perplex'd, round cast he wondering eyes,
Still in his joy, and dumb in his surprise.

Above, beneath, around, on every side,
Of every form and size, were Books descried;
Like Bishop Hatto,[2] when the rats drew near,
And war's new dangers waked his guilty fear,
When thousands came beside, behind, before,
And up and down came on ten thousand more;
A tail'd and whisker'd army, each with claws
As sharp as needles, and with teeth like saws,[3]—
So fill'd with awe, and wonder in his looks,
Stood Peter, 'midst this multitude of Books;
But guiltless he and fearless; yet he sigh'd
To think what treasures were to him denied.

But wonder ceases on continued view;
And the Boy sharp for close inspection grew.
Prints on the table he at first survey'd,
Then to the Books his full attention paid.
At first, from tome to tome, as fancy led,
He view'd the binding, and the titles read;
Lost in delight, and with his freedom pleased,
Then three huge folios from their shelf he seized;
Fixing on one, with prints of every race,
Of beast and bird most rare in every place,—
Serpents, the giants of their tribe, whose prey
Are giants too—a wild ox once a-day;
Here the fierce tiger, and the desert's kings,
And all that move on feet, or fins, or wings—
Most rare and strange; a second volume told
Of battles dire, and dreadful to behold,
On sea or land, and fleets dispersed in storms;
A third has all creative fancy forms,—
Hydra and dire chimera, deserts rude,
And ruins grand, enriching solitude:
Whatever was, or was supposed to be,
Saw Peter here, and still desired to see.

Again he look'd, but happier had he been,
That Book of Wonders he had never seen;
For there were tales of men of wicked mind,
And how the Foe of Man deludes mankind.
Magic and murder every leaf bespread—
Enchanted halls, and chambers of the dead,
And ghosts that haunt the scenes where once the victims bled.

Just at this time, when Peter's heart began
To admit the fear that shames the valiant man,
He paused—but why? " Here 's one my guard to be;
" When thus protected, none can trouble me:"—
Then rising look'd he round, and lo! alone was he.

Three ponderous doors, with locks of shining brass,
Seem'd to invite the trembling Boy to pass;
But fear forbade, till fear itself supplied
The place of courage, and at length he tried.
He grasp'd the key—Alas! though great his need,
The key turn'd not, the bolt would not recede.
Try *then* again; for *what* will not distress?
Again he tried, and with the same success.
Yet one remains, remains untried one door—
A failing hope, for two had fail'd before;
But a bold prince, with fifty doors in sight,
Tried forty-nine before he found the right,—
Before he mounted on the brazen horse,
And o'er the walls pursued his airy course.
So his cold hand on this last key he laid:
" Now turn," said he; the treacherous' bolt obey'd—
The door receded—bringing full in view
The dim, dull chapel, pulpit, desk, and pew.

It was not right—it would have vex'd a saint;
And Peter's anger rose above restraint.
" Was this her love," he cried, " to bring me here,
" Among the dead, to die myself with fear?"—
For Peter judged, with monuments around,
The dead must surely in the place be found:—

[2] [For the history of *Hatto*, Archbishop of *Mentz*, see Coryat's 'Crudities,' p. 571. See also, among Mr. Southey's minor poems, 'God's Judgment on a Bishop.']

[3] ["And in at the windows, and in at the door,
And through the walls, by thousands they pour,
And down through the ceiling, and up through the floor,
From the right and the left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the Bishop they go.
They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones;
They gnaw'd the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgment on him!"
SOUTHEY.]

" With cold to shiver, and with hunger pine—
" ' We 'll see the rooms,' she said, ' before we dine;'
" And spake so kind! That window gives no light:
" Here is enough the boldest man to fright;
" It hardly now is day, and soon it will be night."

Deeply he sigh'd, nor from his heart could chase
The dread of dying in that dismal place;
Anger and sorrow in his bosom strove,
And banish'd all that yet remain'd of love;
When soon despair had seized the trembling Boy,—
But hark, a voice! the sound of peace and joy.

" Where art thou, lad?"—" Oh! here am I, in doubt,
" And sorely frighten'd—can you let me out?"
" Oh! yes, my child; it was indeed a sin,
" Forgetful as I was, to bolt you in.
" I left you reading, and from habit lock'd
" The door behind me, but in truth am shock'd
" To serve you thus; but we will make amends
" For such mistake. Come, cheerly, we are friends."

" Oh, yes!" said Peter, quite alive to be
So kindly used, and have so much to see,
And having so much seen; his way he spied,
Forgot his peril, and rejoin'd his guide.

Now all beheld, his admiration raised,
The lady thank'd, her condescension praised,
And fix'd the hour for dinner, forth the Boy
Went in a tumult of o'erpowering joy,
To view the gardens, and what more was found
In the wide circuit of that spacious ground,
Till, with his thoughts bewilder'd, and oppress'd
With too much feeling, he inclined to rest.

Then in the park he sought its deepest shade,
By trees more aged than the mansion made,
That ages stood; and there unseen a brook
Ran not unheard, and thus our traveller spoke:—
" I am so happy, and have such delight,
" I cannot bear to see another sight;
" It wearies one like work;" and so, with deep
Unconscious sigh, he laid him down to sleep.

Thus he reclining slept, and, oh! the joy
That in his dreams possess'd the happy boy,—
Composed of all he knew, and all he read,
Heard, or conceived, the living and the dead.

The Caliph Haroun, walking forth by night
To see young David and Goliath fight,
Rose on his passive fancy—then appear'd
The fleshless forms of beings scorn'd or fear'd
By just or evil men—the baneful race
Of spirits restless, borne from place to place:
Rivers of blood from conquer'd armies ran,
The flying steed was by, the marble man;
Then danced the fairies round their pigmy queen,
And their feet twinkled on the dewy green,
All in the moonbeams' glory. As they fled,
The mountain loadstone rear'd its fatal head,
And drew the iron-bolted ships on shore,
Where he distinctly heard the billows roar,—
Mix'd with a living voice of—" Youngster, sleep no more,
" But haste to dinner." Starting from the ground,
The waking boy obey'd that welcome sound.

He went and sat, with equal shame and pride,
A welcome guest at Madam Johnson's side.
At his right hand was Mistress Kitty placed,
And Lucy, maiden sly, the stripling faced.
Then each the proper seat at table took—
Groom, butler, footman, laundress, coachman, cook;
For all their station and their office knew,
Nor sat as rustics or the rabble do.

The Youth to each the due attention paid,
And hob-or-nobb'd with Lady Charlotte's maid;
With much respect each other they address'd,
And all encouraged their enchanted guest.
Wine, fruit, and sweetmeats closed repast so long,
And Mistress Flora sang an opera song.

Such was the Day the happy Boy had spent,
And forth delighted from the Hall he went:
Bowing his thanks, he mounted on his steed,
More largely fed than he was wont to feed;
And well for Peter that his pony knew
From whence he came, the road he should pursue;
For the young rider had his mind estranged
From all around, disturb'd and disarranged,
In pleasing tumult, in a dream of bliss,
Enjoy'd but seldom in a world like this.

But though the pleasures of the Day were past,—
For lively pleasures are not form'd to last,—
And though less vivid they became, less strong,
Through life they lived, and were enjoy'd as long:
So deep the impression of that happy Day,
Not time nor cares could wear it all away;
E'en to the last, in his declining years,
He told of all his glories, all his fears.

How blithely forward in that morn he went,
How bless'd the hours in that fair palace spent,
How vast that Mansion, sure for monarch plann'd,
The rooms so many, and yet each so grand,—
Millions of books in one large hall were found,
And glorious pictures every room around;
Beside that strangest of the wonders there,
That house itself contain'd a house of prayer.

He told of park and wood, of sun and shade,
And how the lake below the lawn was made:
He spake of feasting such as never boy,
Taught in his school, was fated to enjoy—
Of ladies' maids as ladies' selves who dress'd,
And her, his friend, distinguish'd from the rest
By grandeur in her look, and state that she possess'd.

He pass'd not one; his grateful mind o'erflow'd
With sense of all he felt, and they bestow'd.

He spake of every office, great or small,
Within, without, and spake with praise of all—
So pass'd the happy Boy that Day at Silford Hall.[4]

TALE II.

THE FAMILY OF LOVE.

In a large town, a wealthy thriving place,
Where hopes of gain excite an anxious race;
Which dark dense wreaths of cloudy volumes cloak,
And mark for leagues around the place of smoke;
Where fire to water lends its powerful aid,
And steam produces—strong ally to trade,—
Arrived a Stranger, whom no merchant knew,
Nor could conjecture what he came to do:
He came not there his fortune to amend,
He came not there a fortune made to spend:
His age not that which men in trade employ;
The place not that where men their wealth enjoy;
Yet there was something in his air that told
Of competency gain'd before the man was old.

He brought no servants with him: those he sought
Were soon his habits and his manners taught—
His manners easy, civil, kind, and free;
His habits such as aged men's will be—
To self indulgent; wealthy men like him
Plead for these failings—'tis their way, their whim.

His frank good-humour, his untroubled air,
His free address, and language bold but fair,
Soon made him friends—such friends as all may make,
Who take the way that he was pleased to take.
He gave his dinners in a handsome style,
And met his neighbours with a social smile;
The wealthy all their easy friend approved,
Whom the more liberal for his bounty loved:
And e'en the cautious and reserved began
To speak with kindness of the frank old man,
Who, though associate with the rich and grave,
Laugh'd with the gay, and to the needy gave
What need requires. At church a seat was shown,
That he was kindly ask'd to think his own:
Thither he went, and neither cold nor heat,
Pains or pretences, kept him from his seat.
This to his credit in the town was told,
And ladies said, "'T is pity he is old:
"Yet, for his years, the Stranger moves like one
"Who of his race has no small part to run."
No envy he by ostentation raised,
And all his hospitable table praised.

[4] [In the first draft of 'Silford Hall' the conclusion is different; and we think it right to preserve the following verses in a note, as they appear to leave little doubt that the story was in fact suggested by the Poet's recollection of his own boyish visits, when an apothecary's apprentice, to Cheveley, a seat of the noble family with whom, in after-years, he was domesticated as Chaplain.

Dream on, dear Boy! let pass a few brief years,
Replete with troubles, comforts, hopes, and fears,
Bold expectations, efforts wild and strong,
And thou shalt find thy fond conjectures wrong.
Imagination rules thee: thine are dreams,
And everything to thee is what it seems:
Thou seest the surfaces of things that pass
Before thee, colour'd by thy fancy's glass.
The fact below is hidden! What is true
In that fair mansion comes not in thy view;
And thou wouldst feel a new and strange surprise,
Should all within upon thy mind arise.
Thou think'st the lords of all these glorious things
Are bless'd supremely! so they are,—like kings!
Envy them not their lofty state, my boy;
They but possess the things that you enjoy.

"Nay, but they 're lords of all you see around—
"Ring but a bell, and men obey the sound;
"Make but a motion with the hand or eye,
"And their attendants at the signal fly."

True, my fair lad! but this is contract all,
For James is paid to heed his Honour's call:
Let wages cease, and lay the livery by,
And James will heed no more than you or I.
Service has lawful bound, and that beyond
Is no obedience—'t is not in the bond.
Footman, or groom, or butler, still he knows,
So does his lord, the duty that he owes.

Labourers, you say, are grieved with daily toil—
True—but the sweater goes not with the soil;
He can change places, change his way of life,
Take new employments,—nay, can take a wife;
If he offend, he knows the law's decree,
For can his judge in his accuser see;

And, more than all the rest—or young or old,
Useful or useless, he can not be sold:
Sorrow and want may in his cot be found,
But not a slave can live on British ground.

Nor have the lords of all this wealth you see
Their perfect freedom: few are truly free:
Who rank the highest find the check of fate,
And kings themselves are subject to their state.

Riches, and all that we desire to gain,
Bind their possessors in a golden chain—
'T is kept in peril, and 't is lost with pain.

And thou too, Boy! wilt pass unheeding by
The scenes that now delight thine eager eye.
Dream on awhile! and there shall come a strange,
And, couldst thou see it, an amazing change.
Thou who wert late so happy, and so proud,
To be a seat with liveried men allow'd,
And would not, dared not, in thy very shame,
The titles of their noble masters name—
Titles that, scarcely known, upon thy tongue
With tremulous and erring accent hung——

Oh! had they told thee, when thou sat'st, with pride
And grateful joy, at Madam Johnson's side,
And heard the lisping Flora, blue-eyed maid,
Bid thee be neither bashful nor afraid,—
When Mrs. Jane thy burning blush had raised,
Because thy modesty and sense she praised,—
Couldst thou have seen that in that place a room
Should be thine own, thy house, thy hall, thy home,
With leave to wander as thou wouldst, to read
Just as thy fancy was disposed to feed,
To live with those who were so far above
Thy reach, it seem'd to thee a crime to love,
Or even admire them!—Little didst thou know
How near approach the lofty and the low!
In all we dare, and all we dare not name,
How much the great and little are the same!

Well, thou hast tried it—thou hast closely seen
What greatness has without it, and within;
Where now the joyful expectation?—fled!
The strong anticipating spirit?—dead!]

His quiet life censorious talk suppress'd,
And numbers hail'd him as their welcome guest.

'T was thought a man so mild and bounteous too,
A world of good within the town might do;
To vote him honours, therefore, they inclined;
But these he sought not, and with thanks resign'd.
His days of business he declared were past,
And he would wait in quiet for the last;
But for a dinner and a day of mirth
He was the readiest being upon earth.

Men call'd him Captain, and they found the name
By him accepted without pride or shame,
Not in the Navy—that did not appear;
Not in the Army—that at least was clear:
" But as he speaks of sea-affairs, he made,
" No doubt, his fortune in the way of trade;
" He might, perhaps, an India-ship command—
" We 'll call him *Captain* now he comes to land."

The Stranger much of various life had seen,
Been poor, been rich, and in the state between;
Had much of kindness met, and much deceit,
And all that man who deals with men must meet.
Not much he read; but from his youth had thought,
And been by care and observation taught:
'T is thus a man his own opinions makes;
He holds that fast, which he with trouble takes:
While one whose notions all from books arise,
Upon his authors, not himself, relies—
A borrow'd wisdom this, that does not make us wise.

Inured to scenes where wealth and place command
Th' observant eye, and the obedient hand,
A Tory spirit his—he ever paid
Obedience due, and look'd to be obey'd.
" Man upon man depends, and, break the chain,
" He soon returns to savage life again;
" As of fair virgins dancing in a round,
" Each binds another, and herself is bound,
" On either hand a social tribe he sees,
" By those assisted, and assisting these;
" While to the general welfare all belong,
" The high in power, the low in number strong."

Such was the Stranger's creed—if not profound,
He judg'd it useful, and proclaim'd it sound:
And many liked it; invitations went
To Captain Elliot, and from him were sent—
These last so often, that his friends confess'd
The Captain's cook had not a place of rest.
Still were they something at a loss to guess
What his profession was from his address;
For much he knew, and too correct was he
For a man train'd and nurtured on the sea:
Yet well he knew the seaman's words and ways,—
Seaman's his look, and nautical his phrase:
In fact, all ended just where they began,
With many a doubt of this amphibious man.

Though kind to all, he look'd with special grace
On a few members of an ancient race,
Long known, and well respected in the place:
Dyson their name; but how regard for these
Rose in his mind, or why they seem'd to please,
Or by what ways, what virtues—not a cause
Can we assign, for Fancy has no laws;
But, as the Captain show'd them such respect,
We will not treat the Dysons with neglect.

Their Father died while yet engaged by trade
To make a fortune that was never made,
But to his children taught; for he would say
" I place them—all I can—in Fortune's way."

James was his first-born; when his father died,
He, in their large domain, the place supplied,
And found, as to the Dysons all appear'd,
Affairs less gloomy than their sire had fear'd;
But then if rich or poor, all now agree,
Frugal and careful, James must wealthy be:
And wealth in wedlock sought, he married soon,
And ruled his Lady from the honeymoon:
Nor shall we wonder; for, his house beside,
He had a sturdy multitude to guide,
Who now his spirit vex'd, and now his temper tried;
Men who by labours live, and, day by day,
Work, weave, and spin their active lives away:
Like bees industrious, they for others strive,
With, now and then, some murmuring in the hive.

James was a Churchman—'t was his pride and boast;
Loyal his heart, and " Church and King " his toast;
He for Religion might not warmly feel,
But for the Church he had abounding zeal.

Yet no dissenting sect would he condemn,—
" They 're nought to us," said he, " nor we to them;
" 'T is innovation of our own I hate,
" Whims and inventions of a modern date.

" Why send you Bibles all the world about,
" That men may read amiss, and learn to doubt?
" Why teach the children of the poor to read,
" That a new race of doubters may succeed?
" Now can you scarcely rule the stubborn crew,
" And what if they should know as much as you?
" Will a man labour when to learning bred,
" Or use his hands who can employ his head?
" Will he a clerk or master's self obey,
" Who thinks himself as well-inform'd as they?"

These were his favourite subjects—these he chose,
And where he ruled no creature durst oppose.

" We are rich," quoth James; " but if we thus proceed,
" And give to all, we shall be poor indeed:
" In war we subsidise the world—in peace
" We christianise—our bounties never cease:
" We learn each stranger's tongue, that they with ease
" May read translated Scriptures, if they please;

"We buy them presses, print them books, and then
"Pay and export poor learned, pious men;
"Vainly we strive a fortune now to get,
"So tax'd by private claims and public debt."

Still he proceeds—"You make your prisons light,
"Airy and clean, your robbers to invite;
"And in such ways your pity show to vice,
"That you the rogues encourage, and entice."

For lenient measures James had no regard—
"Hardship," he said, "must work upon the hard:
"Labour and chains such desperate men require;
"To soften iron you must use the fire."

Active himself, he labour'd to express,
In his strong words, his scorn of idleness;
From him in vain the beggar sought relief—
"Who will not labour is an idle thief,
"Stealing from those who will;" he knew not how
For the untaught and ill-taught to allow,
Children of want and vice, inured to ill,
Unchain'd the passions, and uncurb'd the will.

Alas! he look'd but to his own affairs,
Or to the rivals in his trade, and theirs:
Knew not the thousands who must all be fed,
Yet ne'er were taught to earn their daily bread;
Whom crimes, misfortunes, errors only teach
To seek their food where'er within their reach,
Who for their parents' sins, or for their own,
Are now as vagrants, wanderers, beggars known,
Hunted and hunting through the world, to share
Alms and contempt, and shame and scorn to bear;
Whom Law condemns, and Justice, with a sigh,
Pursuing, shakes her sword and passes by.—
If to the prison we should these commit,
They for the gallows will be render'd fit.

But James had virtues—was esteem'd as one
Whom men look'd up to, and relied upon.
Kind to his equals, social when they met—
If out of spirits, always out of debt;
True to his promise, he a lie disdain'd,
And, e'en when tempted in his trade, refrain'd;
Frugal he was, and loved the cash to spare,
Gain'd by much skill, and nursed by constant care;
Yet liked the social board, and when he spoke,
Some hail'd his wisdom, some enjoy'd his joke.
To him a Brother look'd as one to whom,
If fortune frown'd, he might in trouble come:
His Sisters view'd the important man with awe,
As if a parent in his place they saw:
All lived in Love; none sought their private ends:
The Dysons were a Family of Friends.

His brother David was a studious boy,
Yet could his sports as well as books enjoy.
E'en when a boy he was not quickly read,
If by the heart you judged him, or the head.
His father thought he was decreed to shine,
And be in time an eminent Divine;
But if he ever to the Church inclined,
It is too certain that he changed his mind.
He spoke of scruples, but who knew him best
Affirm'd no scruples broke on David's rest.

Physic and Law were each in turn proposed,—
He weigh'd them nicely, and with Physic closed.

He had a serious air, a smooth address,
And a firm spirit that ensured success.
He watch'd his brethren of the time, how they
Rose into fame, that he might choose his way.

Some, he observed, a kind of roughness used,
And now their patients banter'd, now abused:
The awe-struck people were at once dismay'd,
As if they begg'd th' advice for which they paid.

There are who hold that no disease is slight,
Who magnify the foe with whom they fight.
The sick was told that his was that disease
But rarely known on mortal frame to seize;
Which only skill profound, and full command
Of all the powers in nature, could withstand.
Then, if he lived, what fame the conquest gave!
And if he died—"No human power could save!"

Mere fortune sometimes, and a lucky case,
Will make a man the idol of a place—
Who last, advice to some fair duchess gave,
Or snatch'd a widow's darling from the grave,
Him first she honours of the lucky tribe,
Fills him with praise, and woos him to prescribe.
In his own chariot soon he rattles on,
And half believes the lies that built him one.

But not of these was David: care and pain,
And studious toil, prepar'd his way to gain.
At first observed, then trusted, he became
At length respected, and acquired a name.
Keen, close, attentive, he could read mankind,
The feeble body, and the failing mind;
And if his heart remain'd untouch'd, his eyes,
His air, and tone, with all could sympathise.

This brought him fees, and not a man was he
In weak compassion to refuse a fee.
Yet though the Doctor's purse was well supplied,
Though patients came, and fees were multiplied,
Some secret drain, that none presumed to know,
And few e'en guess'd, for ever kept it low.
Some of a patient spake, a tender fair,
Of whom the Doctor took peculiar care,
But not a fee: he rather largely gave,
Nor spared himself, 't was said, this gentle friend to save.
Her case consumptive, with perpetual need
Still to be fed, and still desire to feed;
An eager craving, seldom known to cease,
And gold alone brought temporary peace.

So, rich he was not; James some fear express'd,
Dear Doctor David would be yet distress'd;
For if now poor, when so repaid his skill,
What fate were his if he himself were ill?

In his religion, Doctor Dyson sought
To teach himself—"A man should not be taught,
"Should not by forms or creeds his mind debase,
"That keep in awe an unreflecting race."
He heeded not what Clarke and Paley say,
But thought himself as good a judge as they;

Yet to the Church profess'd himself a friend,
And would the rector for his hour attend;
Nay, praise the learn'd discourse, and learnedly
defend.
For since the common herd of men are blind,
He judged it right that guides should be assign'd;
And that the few who could themselves direct
Should treat those guides with honour and respect.
He was from all contracted notions freed,
But gave his Brother credit for his creed;
And if in smaller matters he indulged,
'T was well, so long as they were not divulged.

Oft was the spirit of the Doctor tried,
When his grave Sister wish'd to be his guide.
She told him, "All his real friends were grieved
"To hear it said how little he believed:
"Of all who bore the name she never knew
"One to his pastor or his church untrue;
"All have the truth with mutual zeal profess'd,
"And why, dear Doctor, differ from the rest?"

"'T is my hard fate," with serious looks replied
The man of doubt, "to err with such a guide."
"Then why not turn from such a painful state?"—
The doubting man replied, "It is my fate."

Strong in her zeal, by texts and reasons back'd,
In his grave mood the Doctor she attack'd:
Cull'd words from Scripture to announce his doom,
And bade him "think of dreadful things to come."

"If such," he answer'd, "be that state untried,
"In peace, dear Martha, let me here abide;
"Forbear t' insult a man whose fate is known,
"And leave to Heaven a matter all its own."

In the same cause the Merchant, too, would
strive;
He ask'd, "Did ever unbeliever thrive?
"Had he respect? could he a fortune make?
"And why not then such impious men forsake?"

"Thanks, my dear James, and be assured I feel,
"If not your reason, yet at least your zeal;
"And when those wicked thoughts, that keep me
poor,
"And bar respect, assail me as before
"With force combin'd, you 'll drive the fiend
away,
"For you shall reason, James, and Martha pray."

But though the Doctor could reply with ease
To all such trivial arguments as these,—
Though he could reason, or at least deride,
There was a power that would not be defied:
A closer reasoner, whom he could not shun,
Could not refute, from whom he could not run;
For Conscience lived within: she slept, 't is true,
But when she waked, her pangs awaken'd too.
She bade him think; and as he thought, a sigh
Of deep remorse precluded all reply.
No soft insulting smile, no bitter jest,
Could this commanding power of strength divest,
But with reluctant fear her terrors he confess'd.

His weak advisers he could scorn or slight,
But not their cause; for, in their folly's spite,
They took the wiser part, and chose their way
aright.

Such was the Doctor, upon whom for aid
Had some good ladies call'd, but were afraid—
Afraid of one who, if report were just,
The arm of flesh, and that alone, would trust.
But these were few—the many took no care
Of what they judged to be his own affair;
And if he them from their diseases freed,
They neither cared nor thought about his creed:
They said his merits would for much atone,
And only wonder'd that he lived alone.

The widow'd Sister near the Merchant dwelt,
And her late loss with lingering sorrow felt.
Small was her jointure, and o'er this she sigh'd,
That to her heart its bounteous wish denied,
Which yet all common wants, but not her all, supplied.
Sorrows like showers descend, and as the heart
For them prepares, they good or ill impart;
Some on the mind, as on the ocean rain,
Fall and disturb, but soon are lost again;
Some, as to fertile lands, a boon bestow,
And seed, that else had perish'd, live and grow;
Some fall on barren soil, and thence proceed
The idle blossom, and the useless weed;
But how her griefs the Widow's heart impress'd,
Must from the tenor of her life be guess'd.

Rigid she was, persisting in her grief,
Fond of complaint, and adverse to relief.
In her religion she was all severe,
And as she was, was anxious to appear.
When sorrow died, restraint usurp'd the place,
And sat in solemn state upon her face;
Reading she loved not, nor would deign to waste
Her precious time on trifling works of taste;
Though what she did with all that precious time
We know not, but to waste it was a crime—
As oft she said, when with a serious friend
She spent the hours as duty bids us spend;
To read a novel was a kind of sin—
Albeit once Clarissa took her in;
And now of late she heard with much surprise,
Novels there were that made a compromise
Betwixt amusement and religion; these
Might charm the worldly, whom the stories please,
And please the serious, whom the sense would
charm,
And, thus indulging, be secured from harm—
A happy thought, when from the foe we take
His arms, and use them for religion's sake.

Her Bible she perused by day, by night;
It was her task—she said 't was her delight;
Found in her room, her chamber, and her pew,
For ever studied, yet for ever new—
All must be new that we cannot retain,
And new we find it when we read again.

The hardest texts she could with ease expound,
And meaning for the most mysterious found,
Knew which of dubious senses to prefer:
The want of Greek was not a want in her;—

Instinctive light no aid from Hebrew needs—
But full conviction without study breeds;
O'er mortal powers by inborn strength prevails,
Where Reason trembles, and where Learning fails.

To the Church strictly from her childhood bred,
She now her zeal with party-spirit fed:
For brother James she lively hopes express'd,
But for the Doctor's safety felt distress'd;
And her light Sister, poor, and deaf, and blind,
Fill'd her with fears of most tremendous kind.
But David mock'd her for the pains she took,
And Fanny gave resentment for rebuke;
While James approved the zeal, and praised the call,
"That brought," he said, "a blessing on them all:
"Goodness like this to all the House extends,
"For were they not a Family of Friends?"

Their sister Frances, though her prime was past,
Had beauty still—nay, beauty form'd to last;
'T was not the lily and the rose combined,
Nor must we say the beauty of the mind;
But feature, form, and that engaging air
That lives when ladies are no longer fair.
Lovers she had, as she remember'd yet,
For who the glories of their reign forget?
Some she rejected in her maiden pride,
And some in maiden hesitation tried,
Unwilling to renounce, unable to decide.
One lost, another would her grace implore,
Till all were lost, and lovers came no more:
Nor had she that, in beauty's failing state,
Which will recall a lover, or create;
Hers was the slender portion, that supplied
Her real wants, but all beyond denied.

When Fanny Dyson reach'd her fortieth year,
She would no more of love or lovers hear;
But one dear Friend she chose, her guide, her stay,
And to each other all the world were they;
For all the world had grown to them unkind,
One sex censorious, and the other blind.
The Friend of Frances longer time had known
The world's deceits, and from its follies flown.
With her dear Friend life's sober joys to share
Was all that now became her wish and care.
They walk'd together, they conversed and read,
And tender tears for well-feign'd sorrows shed:
And were so happy in their quiet lives,
They pitied sighing maids and weeping wives.

But Fortune to our state such change imparts,
That Pity stays not long in human hearts;
When sad for others' woes our hearts are grown,
This soon gives place to sorrows of our own.

There was among our guardian Volunteers
A Major Bright—he reckon'd fifty years:
A reading man of peace, but call'd to take
His sword and musket for his country's sake;
Not to go forth and fight, but here to stay,
Invaders, should they come, to chase or slay.

Him had the elder Lady long admired,
As one from vain and trivial things retired;
With him conversed; but to a friend so dear
Gave not that pleasure—why, is not so clear;
But chance effected this: the Major now
Gave both the time his duties would allow;
In walks, in visits, when abroad, at home,
The friendly Major would to either come.
He never spoke—for he was not a boy—
Of ladies' charms, or lovers' grief and joy;
All his discourses were of serious kind,
The heart they touch'd not, but they fill'd the mind.
Yet—oh, the pity! from this grave good man
The cause of coolness in the Friends began.
The sage Sophronia—that the chosen name—
Now more polite and more estranged became.
She could but feel that she had longer known
This valued friend—he was indeed her own;
But Frances Dyson, to confess the truth,
Had more of softness—yes, and more of youth;
And though he said such things had ceased to please,
The worthy Major was not blind to these:
So, without thought, without intent, he paid
More frequent visits to the younger Maid.

Such the offence; and though the Major tried
To tie again the knot he thus untied,
His utmost efforts no kind looks repaid,—
He moved no more the inexorable maid.
The Friends too parted, and the elder told
Tales of false hearts, and friendships waxing cold;
And wonder'd what a man of sense could see
In the light airs of wither'd vanity.

'T is said that Frances now the world reviews,
Unwilling all the little left to lose;
She and the Major on the walks are seen,
And all the world is wondering what they mean.

Such were the four whom Captain Elliot drew
To his own board, as the selected few.
For why?—they seem'd each other to approve,
And call'd themselves a Family of Love.

These were not all: there was a youth beside,
Left to his uncles when his parents died:
A Girl, their sister, by a Boy was led
To Scotland, where a boy and girl may wed—
And they return'd to seek for pardon, pence, and bread.
Five years they lived to labour, weep, and pray,
When Death in mercy took them both away.

Uncles and aunts received this lively child,
Grieved at his fate, and at his follies smiled;
But when the child to boy's estate grew on,
The smile was vanish'd, and the pity gone.
Slight was the burden, but in time increased,
Until at length both love and pity ceased.
Then Tom was idle; he would find his way
To his aunt's stores, and make her sweets his prey:
By uncle Doctor on a message sent,
He stopp'd to play, and lost it as he went.
His grave aunt Martha, with a frown austere,
And a rough hand, produced a transient fear;
But Tom, to whom his rude companions taught
Language as rude, vindictive measures sought;

He used such words, that, when she wish'd to speak
Of his offence, she had her words to seek.
The little wretch had call'd her—'t was a shame
To think such thought, and more to name such name.

Thus fed and beaten, Tom was taught to pray
For his true friends: "But who," said he, "are they?"
By nature kind, when kindly used, the Boy
Hail'd the strange good with tears of love and joy;
But, roughly used, he felt his bosom burn
With wrath he dared not on his uncles turn:
So with indignant spirit, still and strong,
He nursed the vengeance, and endured the wrong.
To a cheap school, far north, the boy was sent:
Without a tear of love or grief he went;
Where, doom'd to fast and study, fight and play,
He stay'd five years, and wish'd five more to stay.
He loved o'er plains to run, up hills to climb,
Without a thought of kindred, home, or time;
Till from the cabin of a coasting boy,
Landed at last the thin and freckled boy,
With sharp keen eye, but pale and hollow cheek,
All made more sad from sickness of a week.
His aunts and uncles felt—nor strove to hide
From the poor boy their pity and their pride:
He had been taught that he had not a friend,
Save these, on earth, on whom he might depend;
And such dependence upon these he had
As made him sometimes desperate, always sad.

"Awkward and weak, where can the lad be placed,
"And we not troubled, censured, or disgraced?
"Do, Brother James, th' unhappy boy enrol
"Among your set; you only can control."
James sigh'd, and Thomas to the Factory went,
Who there his days in sundry duties spent.
He ran, he wrought, he wrote—to read or play
He had no time, nor much to feed or pray.
What pass'd without he heard not—or he heard
Without concern, what he nor wish'd nor fear'd;
Told of the Captain and his wealth, he sigh'd,
And said, "How well his table is supplied:"
But with the sigh it caused the sorrow fled;
He was not feasted, but he must be fed,
And he could sleep full sound, though not full soft his bed.

But still ambitious thoughts his mind possess'd,
And dreams of joy broke in upon his rest.
Improved in person, and enlarged in mind,
The good he found not he could hope to find:
Though now enslaved, he hail'd the approaching day
When he should break his chains and flee away.

Such were the Dysons: they were first of those
Whom Captain Elliot as companions chose;
Them he invited, and the more approved,
As it appear'd that each the other loved.
Proud of their brothers were the sister pair,
And if not proud, yet kind the brothers were.
This pleased the Captain, who had never known,
Or he had loved, such kindred of his own:
Them he invited, save the Orphan lad,
Whose name was not the one his Uncles had;
No Dyson he, nor with the party came—
The worthy Captain never heard his name;
Uncles and Aunts forbore to name the boy,
For then, of course, must follow his employ.
Though all were silent, as with one consent,
None told another what his silence meant,
What hers; but each suppress'd the useless truth,
And not a word was mention'd of the youth.

Familiar grown, the Dysons saw their host,
With none beside them: it became their boast,
Their pride, their pleasure; but to some it seem'd
Beyond the worth their talents were esteem'd.
This wrought no change within the Captain's mind:
To all men courteous, he to them was kind.

One day with these he sat, and only these,
In a light humour, talking at his ease:
Familiar grown, he was disposed to tell
Of times long past, and what in them befell—
Not of his life their wonder to attract,
But the choice tale, or insulated fact.
Then, as it seem'd, he had acquired a right
To hear what they could from their stores recite.
Their lives, they said, were all of common kind;
He could no pleasure in such trifles find.

They had an Uncle—'t is their father's tale—
Who in all seas had gone where ship can sail,
Who in all lands had been where man can live;
"He could, indeed, some strange relations give,
"And many a bold adventure; but in vain
"We look for him; he comes not home again."

"And is it so? why, then, if so it be,"
Said Captain Elliot, "you must look to me:
"I knew John Dyson"——Instant every one
Was moved to wonder—"Knew my Uncle John!
"Can he be rich? be childless? He is old,
"That is most certain.—What! can more be told?
"Will he return, who has so long been gone,
"And lost to us? Oh! what of Uncle John?"

This was aside: their unobservant friend
Seem'd on their thoughts but little to attend;
A traveller speaking, he was more inclined
To tell his story than their thoughts to find.

"Although, my Friends, I love you well, 't is true,
"'T was your relation turn'd my mind to you;
"For we were friends of old, and friends like us are few:
"And though from dearest friends a man will hide
"His private vices in his native pride,
"Yet such our friendship from its early rise,
"We no reserve admitted, no disguise;
"But 'tis the story of my friend I tell,
"And to all others let me bid farewell.

"Take each your glass, and you shall hear how John,
"My old companion, through the world has gone;
"I can describe him to the very life,
"Him and his ways, his ventures, and his wife."

"Wife! whisper'd all; "then what his life to us,
"His ways and ventures, if he ventured thus?"
This, too, apart; yet were they all intent,
And, gravely listening, sigh'd with one consent.

"My friend, your Uncle, was design'd for trade,
"To make a fortune as his father made;
"But early he perceived the house declined,
"And his domestic views at once resign'd:
"While stout of heart, with life in every limb,
"He would to sea, and either sink or swim.
"No one forbade; his father shook his hand,
"Within it leaving what he could command.

"He left his home, but I will not relate
"What storms he braved, and how he bore his fate,
"Till his brave frigate was a Spanish prize,
"And prison-walls received his first-born sighs—
"Sighs for the freedom that an English boy,
"Or English man, is eager to enjoy.

"Exchanged, he breathed in freedom, and aboard
"An English ship he found his peace restored;
"War raged around, each British tar was press'd
"To serve his king, and John among the rest;
"Oft had he fought and bled, and 'twas his fate
"In that same ship to grow to man's estate.
"Again 't was war: of France a ship appear'd
"Of greater force, but neither shunn'd nor fear'd:
"'Twas in the Indian Sea, the land was nigh,
"When all prepared to fight, and some to die;
"Man after man was in the ocean thrown,
"Limb after limb was to the surgeon shown,
"And John, at length, poor John! held forth his own.—

"A tedious case—the battle ceased with day,
"And in the night the foe had slipp'd away.
"Of many wounded were a part convey'd
"To land, and he among the number laid:
"Poor, suffering, friendless, who shall now impart
"Life to his hope, or comfort to his heart?
"A kind good priest among the English there
"Selected him as his peculiar care:
"And, when recover'd, to a powerful friend
"Was pleased the lad he loved to recommend;
"Who read your Uncle's mind, and, pleased to read,
"Placed him where talents will in time succeed.

"I will not tease you with details of trade,
"But say he there a decent fortune made,—
"Not such as gave him, if return'd, to buy
"A duke's estate, or principality,
"But a fair fortune: years of peace he knew,
"That were so happy, and that seem'd so few.

"Then came a cloud; for who on earth has seen
"A changeless fortune, and a life serene?
"Ah! then how joyous were the hours we spent!
"But joy is restless, joy is not content.

"There one resided, who, to serve his friend,
"Was pleased a gay fair lady to commend;
"Was pleased t' invite the happy man to dine,
"And introduced the subject o'er their wine;
"Was pleased the lady his good friend should know,
"And as a secret his regard would show.

"A modest man lacks courage; but, thus train'd,
"Your Uncle sought her favour, and obtain'd;
"To me he spake, enraptured with her face,
"Her angel smile, her unaffected grace;
"Her fortune small indeed; but 'Curse the pelf!
"'She is a glorious fortune in herself!'
"'John!' answer'd I, 'friend John, to be sincere,
"These are fine things, but may be bought too dear.
"'You are no stripling, and, it must be said,
"'Have not the form that charms a youthful maid.
"'What you possess, and what you leave behind
"'When you depart, may captivate her mind;
"'And I suspect she will rejoice at heart,
"'Your will once made, if you should soon depart.'

"Long our debate, and much we disagreed;
"'You need no wife,' I said—said he, 'I need;
"'I want a house, I want in all I see
"'To take an interest; what is mine to me?'
"So spake the man, who to his word was just,
"And took the words of others upon trust.
"He could not think that friend, in power so high,
"So much esteem'd, could like a villain lie;
"Nor, till the knot, the fatal knot, was tied,
"Had urged his wedding a dishonour'd bride.
"The man he challenged, for his heart was rent
"With rage and grief, and was to prison sent;
"For men in power—and this, alas! was one—
"Revenge on all the wrongs themselves have done;
"And he whose spirit bends not to the blow
"The tyrants strike, shall no forgiveness know,
"For 't is to slaves alone that tyrants favour show.

"This cost him *much*; but that he did not heed;
"The lady died, and my poor friend was freed.
"'Enough of ladies!' then said he, and smiled;
"'I've now no longings for a neighbour's child.'
"So patient he return'd, and not in vain,
"To his late duties, and grew rich again.
"He was no miser; but the man who takes
"Care to be rich will love the gain he makes;
"Pursuing wealth, he soon forgot his woes,—
"No acts of his were bars to his repose.

"Now John was rich, and, old and weary grown,
"Talk'd of the country that he calls his own,
"And talk'd to me; for now, in fact, began
"My better knowledge of the real man.
"Though long estranged, he felt a strong desire
"That made him for his former friends inquire;
"What Dysons yet remain'd he long'd to know,
"And doubtless meant some proofs of love to show.

" His purpose known, our native land I sought,
" And with the wishes of my Friend am fraught."

Fix'd were all eyes, suspense each bosom shook,
And expectation hung on every look.

" ' Go to my kindred, seek them all around,
" ' Find all you can, and tell me all that 's found;
" ' Seek them if prosperous, seek them in distress,
" ' Hear what they need, know what they all possess;
" ' What minds, what hearts they have, how good they are,
" ' How far from goodness—speak, and no one spare,
" ' And no one slander: let me clearly see
" ' What is in them, and what remains for me.'

" Such is my charge, and haply I shall send
" Tidings of joy and comfort to my Friend.
" Oft would he say, ' If of our race survive
" ' Some two or three to keep the name alive,
" ' I will not ask if rich or great they be,
" ' But if they live in love, like you and me.'

" 'T was not my purpose yet awhile to speak
" As I have spoken; but why further seek?
" All that I heard I in my heart approve;
" You are indeed a Family of Love:
" And my old friend were happy in the sight
" Of those of whom I shall such tidings write."

The Captain wrote not: he perhaps was slow,
Perhaps he wish'd a little more to know.
He wrote not yet, and, while he thus delay'd,
Frances alone an early visit paid.
The maiden Lady braved the morning cold,
To tell her Friend what duty bade be told,
Yet not abruptly—she has first to say,
" How cold the morning, but how fine the day;—
" I fear you slept but ill, we kept you long,
" You made us all so happy, but 't was wrong—
" So entertain'd, no wonder we forgot
" How the time pass'd; I fear me you did not."

In this fair way the Lady seldom fail'd
To steer her course, still sounding as she sail'd.

" Dear Captain Elliot, how your Friends you read!
" We are a loving Family indeed;
" Left in the world each other's aid to be,
" And join to raise a fallen family.
" Oh! little thought we there was one so near,
" And one so distant, to us all so dear—
" All, all alike; he cannot know, dear man!
" Who needs him most, as one among us can—
" One who can all our wants distinctly view,
" And tell him fairly what were just to do:
" But you, dear Captain Elliot, as his friend,
" As ours, no doubt, will your assistance lend.
" Not for the world would I my Brothers blame—
" Good men they are—'t was not for that I came.
" No! did they guess what shifts I make, the grief
" That I sustain, they 'd fly to my relief:
" But I am proud as poor; I cannot plead
" My cause with them, nor show how much I need;
" But to my Uncle's Friend it is no shame,
" Nor have I fear, to seem the thing I am;
" My humble pittance life's mere need supplies,
" But all indulgence, all beyond, denies.
" I aid no pauper, I myself am poor,
" I cannot help the beggar at my door.
" I from my scanty table send no meat;
" Cook'd and recook'd is every joint I eat.
" At church a sermon begs our help,—I stop
" And drop a tear; nought else have I to drop;
" But pass the out-stretch'd plate with sorrow by,
" And my sad heart this kind relief deny.
" My dress—I strive with all my maiden skill
" To make it pass, but 't is disgraceful still;
" Yet from all others I my wants conceal,—
" Oh! Captain Elliot, there are few that feel!
" But did that rich and worthy Uncle know
" What you, dear sir, will in your kindness show,
" He would his friendly aid with generous hand bestow.

" Good men my Brothers both, and both are raised
" Far above want—the Power that gave be praised!
" My Sister's jointure, if not ample, gives
" All she can need, who as a lady lives;
" But I, unaided, may through all my years
" Endure these ills—forgive these foolish tears.

" Once, my dear sir—I then was young and gay,
" And men would talk—but I have had my day:
" Now all I wish is so to live that men
" May not despise me whom they flatter'd then.
" If you, kind sir——"
Thus far the Captain heard,
Nor, save by sign or look, had interfered;
But now he spoke; to all she said agreed,
And she conceived it useless to proceed.
Something he promised, and the Lady went
Half-pleased away, yet wondering what he meant.
Polite he was and kind, but she could trace
A smile, or something like it, in his face;
'T was not a look that gave her joy or pain—
She tried to read it, but she tried in vain.

Then call'd the Doctor—'t was his usual way—
To ask, " How fares my worthy friend to-day?"
To feel his pulse, and as a friend to give
Unfee'd advice how such a man should live;
And thus, digressing, he could soon contrive
At his own purpose smoothly to arrive.

" My Brother! yes, he lives without a care,
" And, though he needs not, yet he loves to spare.
" James I respect; and yet, it must be told,
" His speech is friendly, but his heart is cold:
" His smile assumed has not the real glow
" Of love—a sunbeam shining on the snow!
" Children he has; but are they causes why
" He should our pleas resist, our claims deny?
" Our father left the means by which he thrives,
" While we are labouring to support our lives.
" *We*, need I say? my widow'd Sister lives
" On a large jointure; nay, she largely gives;—

" And Fanny sighs—for gold does Fanny sigh?
" Or wants she that which money cannot buy—
" Youth and young hopes?—Ah! could my kindred share
" The liberal mind's distress, and daily care,
" The painful toil to gain the petty fee,
" They 'd bless their stars, and join to pity me.
" Hard is his fate who would, with eager joy,
" To save mankind his every power employ;
" Yet in his walk unnumber'd insults meets,
" And gains 'mid scorn the food that chokes him as he eats.

" Oh! Captain Elliot, you who know mankind,
" With all the anguish of the feeling mind,
" Bear to our kind relation these the woes
" That e'en to you 't is misery to disclose.
" You can describe what I but faintly trace—
" A man of learning cannot bear disgrace;
" Refinement sharpens woes that wants create,
" And 't is fresh grief such grievous things to state;
" Yet those so near me let me not reprove—
" I love them well, and they deserve my love;
" But want they know not—Oh! that I could say
" I am in this as ignorant as they."

The Doctor thus.—The Captain, grave and kind,
To the sad tale with serious looks inclined,
And promise made to keep th' important speech in mind.

James and the Widow, how is yet unknown,
Heard of these visits, and would make their own.
All was not fair, they judged, and both agreed
To their good Friend together to proceed.
Forth then they went to see him, and persuade—
As warm a pair as ever Anger made.
The Widow Lady must the speaker be;
So James agreed; for words at will had she:
And then her Brother, if she needed proof,
Should add, " 'T is truth:"—it was for him enough.

" Oh! sir, it grieves me"—for we need not dwell
On introduction, all was kind and well:—
" Oh! sir, it grieves, it shocks us both to hear
" What has, with selfish purpose, gain'd your ear—
" Our very flesh and blood, and, as you know, how dear.
" Doubtless they came your noble mind t' impress
" With strange descriptions of their own distress;
" But I would to the Doctor's face declare
" That he has more to spend and more to spare,
" With all his craft, than we with all our care.

" And for our Sister, all she has she spends
" Upon herself; herself alone befriends.
" She has the portion that our father left,
" While me of mine a careless wretch bereft,
" Save a small part; yet I could joyful live,
" Had I my mite—the widow's mite—to give.
" For this she cares not; Frances does not know
" Their heartfelt joy, who largely can bestow.
" You, Captain Elliot, feel the pure delight
" That our kind acts in tender hearts excite,
" When to the poor we can our alms extend,
" And make the Father of all Good our friend;
" And, I repeat, I could with pleasure live,
" Had I my mite—the widow's mite—to give.

" We speak not thus, dear sir, with vile intent,
" Our nearest friends to wrong or circumvent;
" But that our Uncle, worthy man! should know
" How best his wealth, Heaven's blessing, to bestow;
" What widows need, and chiefly those who feel
" For all the sufferings which they cannot heal;
" And men in trade, with numbers in their pay,
" Who must be ready for the reckoning-day,
" Or gain or lose!"—
—" Thank Heaven," said James, " as yet
" I 've not been troubled by a dun or debt."
The Widow sigh'd, convinced that men so weak
Will ever hurt the cause for which they speak;
However tempted to deceive, still they
Are ever blundering to the broad highway
Of very truth:—But Martha pass'd it by.
With a slight frown and half-distinguish'd sigh.

" Say to our Uncle, sir, how much I long
" To see him sit his kindred race among:
" To hear his brave exploits, to nurse his age,
" And cheer him in his evening's pilgrimage;
" How were I bless'd to guide him in the way
" Where the religious poor in secret pray,
" To be the humble means by which his heart
" And liberal hand might peace and joy impart!
" But now, farewell!"—And slowly, softly fell
The tender accents as she said " Farewell!"

The Merchant stretch'd his hand, his leave to take,
And gave the Captain's a familiar shake,
Yet seem'd to doubt if this was not too free;
But, gaining courage, said, " Remember me."

Some days elapsed, the Captain did not write,
But still was pleased the party to invite;
And, as he walk'd, his custom every day,
A tall pale stripling met him on his way,
Who made some efforts, but they proved too weak,
And only show'd he was inclined to speak.
" What wouldst thou, lad?" the Captain ask'd, and gave
The youth a power his purposed boon to crave,
Yet not in terms direct—" My name," quoth he,
" Is Thomas Bethel; you have heard of me?"—
" Not good nor evil, Thomas—had I need
" Of so much knowledge:—but pray now proceed."

" Dyson my mother's name; but I have not
" That interest with you, and the worse my lot.
" I serve my Uncle James, and run and write,
" And watch and work, from morning until night;
" Confined among the looms, and webs, and wheels,
" You cannot think how like a slave one feels.
" 'T is said you have a ship at your command,—
" An' please you, sir, I 'm weary of the land;
" And I have read of foreign parts such things
" As make me sick of Uncle's wheels and springs."

" But, Thomas, why to sea? you look too slim
" For that rough work—and, Thomas, can you swim?"

That he could not, but still he scorn'd a lie,
And boldly answer'd, "No, but I can try."
"Well, my good lad, but tell me, can you read?"
Now, with some pride he answer'd, "Yes, indeed!
"I construe Virgil, and our usher said
"I might have been in Homer had I stay'd,
"And he was sorry when I came away,
"And so was I, but Uncle would not pay;
"He told the master I had read enough,
"And Greek was all unprofitable stuff;
"So all my learning now is thrown away,
"And I've no time for study or for play;
"I'm order'd here and there, above, below,
"And call'd a dunce for what I cannot know;
"Oh, that I were but from this bondage free!
"Do, please your honour, let me go to sea."

"But why to sea? they want no Latin there;
"Hard is their work, and very hard their fare."

"But then," said Thomas, "if on land, I doubt
"My Uncle Dyson soon would find me out;
"And though he tells me what I yearly cost,
"'T is my belief he 'd miss me were I lost.
"For he has said that I can act as well
"As he himself—but this you must not tell."

"Tell, Thomas! no, I scorn the base design;
"Give me your hand, I pledge my word with mine;
"And if I cannot do thee good, my friend,
"Thou mayst at least upon that word depend.
"And hark ye, lad, thy worthy name retain
"To the last hour, or I shall help in vain;
"And then, the more severe and hard thy part,
"Thine the more praise, and thine the happier art.
"We meet again—farewell!"—and Thomas went
Forth to his tasks, half angry, half content.

"I never ask'd for help," thought he, "but twice,,
"And all they then would give me was advice;
"My Uncle Doctor, when I begg'd his aid,
"Bade me work on, and never be afraid,
"But still be good; and I 've been good so long,
"I 'm half persuaded that they tell me wrong.
"And now this Captain still repeats the same;
"But who can live upon a virtuous name,
"Starving and praised?—'Have patience—patience still!'
"He said, and smiled, and, if I can, I will."

So Thomas rested with a mind intent
On what the Captain by his kindness meant.

Again the invited party all attend,
These dear relations, on this generous Friend.
They ate, they drank, each striving to appear
Fond, frank, forgiving—above all, sincere.
Such kindred souls could not admit disguise,
Or envious fears, or painful jealousies;
So each declared, and all in turn replied,
"'T is just indeed, and cannot be denied."

Now various subjects rose,—the country's cause,
The war, the allies, the lottery, and the laws.
The widow'd Sister then advantage took
Of a short pause, and, smiling softly, spoke:
She judged what subject would his mind excite—
"Tell us, dear Captain, of that bloody fight,
"When our brave Uncle, bleeding at his gun,
"Gave a loud shout to see the Frenchmen run."

"Another day,"—replied the modest host;
"One cannot always of one's battles boast.
"Look not surprise—behold the man in me!
"Another Uncle shall you never see.
"No other Dyson to this place shall come,
"Here end my travels, here I place my home;
"Here to repose my shatter'd frame I mean,
"Until the last long journey close the scene."

The Ladies softly brush'd the tear away;
James look'd surprise, but knew not what to say;
But Doctor Dyson lifted up his voice,
And said, "Dear Uncle, how we all rejoice!"

"No question, Friends! and I your joy approve;
"We are, you know, a Family of Love."

So said the wary Uncle, but the while
Wore on his face a questionable smile,
That vanish'd, as he spake in grave and solemn style:—

"Friends and relations! let us henceforth seem
"Just as we are, nor of our virtues dream,
"That with our waking vanish.—What we are
"Full well we know—t' improve it be our care.
"Forgive the trial I have made: 't is one
"That has no more than I expected done.
"If, as frail mortals you, my Friends, appear,
"I look'd for no angelic beings here,
"For none that riches spurn'd as idle pelf,
"Or served another as he served himself.
"Deceived no longer, let us all forgive;
"I 'm old, but yet a tedious time may live.
"This dark complexion India's suns bestow,
"These shrivell'd looks to years of care I owe;
"But no disease ensures my early doom,—
"And I may live—forgive me—years to come.
"But while I live, there may some good be done;
"Perchance to many, but at least to One."

Here he arose, retired, return'd, and brought
The Orphan boy, whom he had train'd and taught
For this his purpose; and the happy boy,
Though bade to hide, could ill suppress, his joy.

"This young relation, with your leave, I take,
"That he his progress in the world may make—
"Not in my house a slave or spy to be,
"And first to flatter, then to govern me;—
"He shall not nurse me when my senses sleep,
"Nor shall the key of all my secrets keep,
"And be so useful, that a dread to part
"Shall make him master of my easy heart;—
"But to be placed where merit may be proved,
"And all that now impedes his way removed.

"And now no more on these affairs I dwell,
"What I possess, that I alone can tell,
"And to that subject we will bid farewell.
"As go I must, when Heaven is pleased to call,
"What I shall leave will seem or large or small,

"As you shall view it. When this pulse is still,
"You may behold my wealth, and read my will.

"And now, as Captain Elliot much has known,
"That to your Uncle never had been shown,
"From him one word of honest counsel hear—
"*And think it always gain to be sincere.*"

TALE III.

THE EQUAL MARRIAGE.

THERE are gay nymphs whom serious matrons blame,
And men adventurous treat as lawful game,—
Misses, who strive, with deep and practised arts,
To gain and torture inexperienced hearts;
The hearts entangled they in pride retain,
And at their pleasure make them feel their chain.
For this they learn to manage air and face,
To look a virtue, and to act a grace,
To be whatever men with warmth pursue—
Chaste, gay, retiring, tender, timid, true,
To-day approaching near, to-morrow just in view.

Maria Glossip was a thing like this—
A much-observing, much-experienced Miss;
Who, on a stranger-youth would first decide
Th' important question—"Shall I be his bride?"
But if unworthy of a lot so bless'd,
'T was something yet to rob the man of rest;
The heart, when stricken, she with hope could feed,
Could court pursuit, and, when pursued, recede.
Hearts she had won, and with delusion fed,
With doubt bewilder'd, and with hope misled;
Mothers and rivals she had made afraid,
And wrung the breast of many a jealous maid;
Friendship, the snare of lovers, she profess'd,
And turn'd the heart's best feelings to a jest.

Yet seem'd the Nymph as gentle as a dove,
Like one all guiltless of the game of love,—
Whose guileless innocence might well be gay;
Who had no selfish secrets to betray;
Sure, if she play'd, she knew not how to play.
Oh! she had looks so placid and demure,
Not Eve, ere fallen, seem'd more meek or pure;
And yet the Tempter of the falling Eve
Could not with deeper subtilty deceive.

A Sailor's heart the Lady's kindness moved,
And winning looks, to say how well he loved;
Then left her hopeful for the stormy main,
Assured of love when he return'd again.
Alas! the gay Lieutenant reach'd the shore,
To be rejected, and was gay no more;
Wine and strong drink the bosom's pain suppress'd,
Till Death procured what Love denied him—rest.

But men of more experience learn to treat
These fair enslavers with their own deceit.

Finch was a younger brother's youngest son,
Who pleased an Uncle with his song and gun:
Who call'd him "Bob," and "Captain"—by that name
Anticipating future rank and fame:
Not but there was for this some fair pretence,—
He was a cornet in the Home Defence.
The Youth was ever dress'd in dapper style,
Wore spotless linen, and a ceaseless smile;
His step was measured, and his air was nice—
They bought him high who had him at the price
That his own judgment and becoming pride,
And all the merit he assumed, implied.
A life he loved of liberty and ease,
And all his pleasant labour was to please;
Not call'd at present hostile men to slay,
He made the hearts of gentle dames his prey.

Hence *tales* arose, and one of sad report—
A fond, fair *girl* became his folly's sport,—
A cottage lass, who "knew the youth would prove
"For ever true, and give her love for love;
"Sure when he could, and that would soon be known,
"He would be proud to show her as his own."

But still she felt the village damsels' sneer,
And her sad soul was fill'd with secret fear;
His love excepted, earth was all a void,
And he, the excepted man, her peace destroy'd.
When the poor Jane was buried, we could hear
The threat of rustics whisper'd round her bier.

Stories like this were told, but yet, in time,
Fair ladies lost their horror at the crime;
They knew that cottage girls were forward things,
Who never heed a nettle till it stings;
Then, too, the Captain had his fault confess'd,
And scorn'd to turn a murder to a jest.

Away with murder!—This accomplish'd swain
Beheld Maria, and confess'd her reign.
She came, invited by the rector's wife,
Who "never saw such sweetness in her life."
Now, as the rector was the Uncle's friend,
It pleased the Nephew there his steps to bend,
Where the fair damsel then her visit paid,
And seem'd an unassuming rustic maid:
A face so fair, a look so meek, he found
Had pierced that heart no other nymph could wound.

"Oh, sweet Maria"—so began the Youth
His meditations—"thine the simple truth!
"Thou hast no wicked wisdom of thy sex,
"No wish to gain a subject-heart—then vex.
"That heavenly bosom no proud passion swells,
"No serpent's wisdom with thy meekness dwells.
"Oh! could I bind thee to my heart, and live
"In love with thee, on what our fortunes give!
"Far from the busy world, in some dear spot,
"Where Love reigns king, we'd find some peaceful cot.

" To wed, indeed, no prudent man would choose ;
" But, such a maid will lighter bonds refuse !"

And was this youth a rake?—In very truth ;
Yet, feeling love, he felt it as a youth :
If he had vices, they were laid aside ;
He quite forgot the simple girl who died ;
With dear Maria he in peace would live,
And what had pass'd, Maria would forgive.

The fair Coquette at first was pleased to find
A swain so knowing had become so blind ;
And she determined, with her utmost skill,
To bind the rebel to her sovereign will.
She heard the story of the old deceit,
And now resolved he should with justice meet ;—
" Soon as she saw him on her hook secure,
" He should the pangs of perjured man endure."

These her first thoughts—but as, from time to time,
The Lover came, she dwelt not on his crime—
" Crime could she call it? prudes, indeed, condemn
" These slips of youth—but she was not of them."
So gentler thoughts arose as, day by day,
The Captain came his passion to display.
When he display'd his passion, and she felt,
Not without fear, her heart began to melt—
Joy came with terror at a state so new ;
Glad of his truth—if he indeed were true !

This she decided as the heart decides,
Resolved to be the happiest of brides.
" Not great my fortune—hence," said she, " 't is plain
" Me, and not mine, dear Youth ! he hopes to gain :
" Nor has he much ; but, as he sweetly talks,
" We from our cot shall have delightful walks,
" Love, lord within it ! I shall smile to see
" My little cherubs on the father's knee."
Then sigh'd the nymph, and in her fancied lot
She all the mischiefs of the past forgot.

Such were their tender meditations ; thus
Would they the visions of the day discuss :
Each, too, the old sad habits would no more
Indulge ; both dare be virtuous and be poor.

They both had pass'd the year when law allows
Free-will to lover who would fain be spouse :
Yet the good youth his Uncle's sanction sought—
" Marry her, Bob ! and are you really caught?
" Then you 've exchanged, I warrant, heart for heart—
" 'T is well ! I meant to warn her of your art :
" This Parson's Babe has made you quite a fool—
" But are you sure your ardour will not cool?
" Have you not habits, Boy? but take your chance !
" How will you live? I cannot much advance.
" But hear you not what through the village flies,
" That this your dove is famed for her disguise ?
" Yet, say they not, she leads a gayish life ?
" Art sure she 'll show the virtues of a wife ?"

" Oh, Sir, she 's all that mortal man can love !"—
" Then marry, Bob ! and that the fact will prove ;
" Yet in a kind of lightness folk agree."—
" Lightness in her ! indeed, it cannot be—
" 'T is Innocence alone that makes her manners free."

" Well, my good friend ! then Innocence alone
" Is to a something like Flirtation prone :
" And I advise—but let me not offend—
" That Prudence should on Innocence attend,
" Lest some her sportive purity mistake,
" And term your angel more than half a rake."

The Nymph, now sure, could not entirely curb
The native wish her lover to disturb.
Oft he observed her, and could ill endure
The gentle coquetry of maid so pure.
Men he beheld press round her, and the Fair
Caught every sigh, and smiled at every prayer :
And grieved he was with jealous pains to see
The effects of all her wit and pleasantry.

" Yet why alarm'd ?"—he said ; " with so much sense,
" She has no freedom, dashing, or pretence :
" 'T is her gay mind, and I should feel a pride
" In her chaste levities "—he said, and sigh'd.
Yet, when apart from company, he chose
To talk a little of his bosom's woes ;
But one sweet smile, and one soft speech, suppress'd
All pain, and set his feeling heart at rest.
Nay, in return, she felt, or feign'd, a fear,—
" He was too lively to be quite sincere ;
" She knew a certain lady, and could name
" A certain time."—So, even was the blame,
And thus the loving pair more deep in love became.

They married soon—for why delay the thing
That such amazing happiness would bring ?—
Now of that blissful state, O Muse of Hymen ! sing.

Love dies all kinds of death : in some so quick
It comes, he is not previously sick ;
But ere the sun has on the couple shed
The morning rays, the smile of Love is fled.

And what the cause? for Love should not expire,
And none the reason of such fate require.
Both had a mask, that with such pains they wore,
Each took it off when it avail'd no more.
They had no feeling of each other's pain ;
To wear it longer had been crime in vain.

As in some pleasant eve we view the scene,
Though cool yet calm, if joyless yet serene,—
Who has not felt a quiet still delight
In the clear, silent, love-befriending night?
The moon so sweetly bright, so softly fair,
That all but happy lovers would be there,—
Thinking there must be in her still domain
Something that soothes the sting of mortal pain :
While earth itself is dress'd in light so clear,
That they might rest contented to be here !

Such is the night; but when the morn awakes,
The storm arises, and the forest shakes;
This mighty change the grieving travellers find,
The freezing snows fast drifting in the wind;
Firs deeply laden shake the snowy top,
Streams slowly freezing, fretting till they stop;
And void of stars the angry clouds look down
On the cold earth, exchanging frown with frown.

Such seem'd, at first, the cottage of our pair—
Fix'd in their fondness, in their prospects fair;
Youth, health, affection, all that life supplies,
Bright as the stars that gild the cloudless skies,
Were theirs—or seem'd to be, but soon the scene
Was black as if its light had never been.
Weary full soon, and restless then they grew,
Then off the painful mask of prudence threw,
For Time has told them all; and taught them what to rue.
They long again to tread the former round
Of dissipation—"Why should he be bound,
"While his sweet inmate of the cottage sighs
"For adulation, rout, and rhapsodies?
"Not Love himself, did love exist, could lead
"A heart like hers, that flutter'd to be freed."

But Love, or what seem'd like him, quickly died,
Nor Prudence, nor Esteem, his place supplied.
Disguise thrown off, each reads the other's heart,
And feels with horror that they cannot part.

Still they can speak—and 't is some comfort still,
That each can vex the other when they will:
Words half in jest to words in earnest led,
And these the earnest angry passions fed,
Till all was fierce reproach, and peace for ever fled.

"And so you own it! own it to my face!
"Your love is vanish'd—infamous and base!

"Madam, I loved you truly, while I deem'd
"You were the truthful being that you seem'd:
"But when I see your native temper rise
"Above control, and break through all disguise,
"Casting it off, as serpents do their skin,
"And showing all the folds of vice within,—
"What see I then to love? Was I in love with Sin?"

"So may I think, and you may feel it too;
"A loving couple, sir, were Sin and you!
"Whence all this anger? is it that you find
"You cannot always make a woman blind?
"You talk of falsehood and disguise—talk on!
"But all my trust and confidence are gone;
"Remember you, with what a serious air
"You talk'd of love, as if you were at prayer?
"You spoke of home-born comforts, quiet, ease,
"And the pure pleasure that must always please,
"With an assumed and sentimental air,
"Smiting your breast, and acting like a player.
"Then your life's comfort! and your holy joys!
"Holy, forsooth! and your sweet girls and boys,
"How you would train them!—All this farce review,
"And then, sir, talk of being just and true!"

"Madam! your sex expects that ours should lie:
"The simple creatures know it, and comply.
"You hate the truth: there's nothing you despise
"Like a plain man, who spurns your vanities.
"Are you not early taught your prey to catch?
"When your mammas pronounce—'A proper match!'
"What said your own?—'Do, daughter! curb your tongue,
"'And you may win him, for the man is young;
"'But if he views you as ourselves, good-bye
"'To speculation!—He will never try.'

"Then is the mask assumed, and then you bait
"Your hook with kindness! and as anglers wait,
"Now here, now there, with keen and eager glance,
"Marking your victims as the shoals advance:
"When, if the gaping wretch should make a snap,
"You jerk him up, and have him in your trap,
"Who, gasping, panting, in your presence lies,
"And you exulting view the imprison'd prize.

"Such are your arts! while he did but intend
"In harmless play an idle hour to spend,
"Lightly to talk of love! your fix'd intent
"Is on to lure him where he never meant
"To go, but going, must his speed repent.
"If he of Cupid speaks, you watch your man,
"And make a change for Hymen, if you can;
"Thus he, ingenuous, easy, fond, and weak,
"Speaks the rash words he has been led to speak;
"Puts the dire question that he meant to shun,
"And by a moment's frenzy is undone."

"Well!" said the Wife, "admit this nonsense true,—
"A mighty prize she gains in catching you;
"For my part, sir, I most sincerely wish
"My landing-net had miss'd my precious fish!"

"Would that it had! or I had wisely lent
"An ear to those who said I should repent."

"Hold, sir! at least my reputation spare,
"And add another falsehood if you dare."

"Your reputation, madam;—rest secure,
"That will all scandal and reproach endure,
"And be the same in worth: it is like him
"Who floats, but finds he cannot sink or swim;
"Half raised above the storm, half sunk below,
"It just exists, and that is all we know.
"Such the good name that you so much regard,
"And yet to keep afloat find somewhat hard.
"Nay, no reply! in future I decline
"Dispute, and take my way."—
"And I, sir, mine."

Oh! happy, happy, happy pair! both sought,
Both seeking—catching both, and caught!

TALE IV.

RACHEL.

It chanced we walk'd upon the heath, and met
A wandering woman; her thin clothing wet
With morning fog: the little care she took
Of things like these was written in her look.
Not pain from pinching cold was in her face,
But hurrying grief, that knows no resting-place,—
Appearing ever as on business sent,
The wandering victim of a fix'd intent;
Yet, in her fancied consequence and speed,
Impell'd to beg assistance for her need.

When she beheld my friend and me, with eye
And pleading hand she sought our charity;
More to engage our friendly thoughts the while,
She threw upon her miseries a smile,
That, like a varnish on a picture laid,
More prominent and bold the figures made;
Yet was there sign of joy that we complied,
The moment's wish indulged and gratified.

" Where art thou wandering, Rachel? whither stray
" From thy poor heath in such unwholesome day?"
Ask'd my kind friend, who had familiar grown
With Rachel's grief, and oft compassion shown;
Oft to her hovel had in winter sent
The means of comfort—oft with comforts went.
Him well she knew, and with requests pursued,
Though too much lost and spent for gratitude.

" Where art thou wandering, Rachel? let me hear."—
" The fleet! the fleet!" she answer'd, " will appear
" Within the bay, and I shall surely know
" The news to-night!—turn tide, and breezes blow!
" For if I lose my time, I must remain
" Till the next year before they come again!"

" What can they tell thee, Rachel?"—
" Should I say,
" I must repent me to my dying day.
" Then I should lose the pension that they give:
" For who would trust their secrets to a sieve?
" I must be gone!"—And with her wild, but keen
And crafty look, that would appear to mean,
She hurried on; but turn'd again to say,
" All will be known: they anchor in the bay;
" Adieu! be secret!—sailors have no home:
" Blow wind, turn tide!—Be sure the fleet will come."

Grown wilder still, the frantic creature strode
With hurried feet upon the flinty road.
On her departing form I gazed with pain—
" And should you not," I cried, " her ways restrain?
" What hopes the wild deluded wretch to meet?
" And means she aught by this expected fleet?
" Knows she her purpose? has she hope to see
" Some friend to aid her in her poverty?
" Why leave her thus bewilder'd to pursue
" The fancy's good, that never comes in view?"

" Nay! she is harmless, and, if more confined,
" Would more distress in the coercion find.
" Save at the times when to the coast she flies,
" She rests, nor shows her mind's obliquities,
" But ever talks she of the sea, and shows
" Her sympathy with every wind that blows.
" We think it, therefore, useless to restrain
" A creature of whose conduct none complain,
" Whose age and looks protect her,—should they fail,
" Her craft and wild demeanour will prevail.
" A soldier once attack'd her on her way—
" She spared him not, but bade him kneel and pray—
" Praying herself aloud: th' astonish'd man
" Was so confounded, that away he ran.

" Her sailor left her, with, perhaps, intent
" To make her his—'t is doubtful what he meant:
" But he was captured, and the life he led
" Drove all such young engagements from his head.
" On him she ever thought, and none beside,
" Seeking her love, were favour'd or denied;
" On her dear David she had fix'd her view,
" And fancy judged him ever fond and true—
" Nay, young and handsome—Time could not destroy—
" No—he was still the same—her gallant boy!
" Labour had made her coarse, and her attire
" Show'd that she wanted no one to admire,
" None to commend her; but she could conceive
" The same of him as when he took his leave,
" And gaily told what riches he would bring,
" And grace her hand with the symbolic ring.

" With want and labour was her mind subdued;
" She lived in sorrow and in solitude.
" Religious neighbours, kindly calling, found
" Her thoughts unsettled, anxious, and unsound:
" Low, superstitious, querulous, and weak,
" She sought for rest, but knew not how to seek;
" And their instructions, though in kindness meant,
" Were far from yielding the desired content.
" They hoped to give her notions of their own,
" And talk'd of 'feelings' she had never known;
" They ask'd of her 'experience,' and they bred
" In her weak mind a melancholy dread
" Of something wanting in her faith, of some—
" She knew not what—'acceptance,' that should come;
" And, as it came not, she was much afraid
" That she in vain had served her God and pray'd.

" She thought her Lover dead. In prayer she named
" The erring Youth, and hoped he was reclaim'd.
" This she confess'd; and, trembling, heard them say
" 'Her prayers were sinful—so the papists pray.
" 'Her David's fate had been decided long,
" 'And prayers and wishes for his state were wrong.'

" Had these her guides united love and skill,
" They might have ruled and rectified her will;
" But they perceived not the bewilder'd mind,
" And show'd her paths that she could never find:
" The weakness that was Nature's they reproved,
" And all its comforts from the heart removed.

" E'en in this state she loved the winds that sweep
" O'er the wild heath, and curl the restless deep;
" A turf-built hut beneath a hill she chose,
" And oft at night in winter storms arose,
" Hearing, or dreaming, the distracted cry
" Of drowning seamen on the breakers by:
" For there were rocks that, when the tides were low,
" Appear'd, and vanish'd when the waters flow;
" And there she stood, all patient to behold
" Some seaman's body on the billows roll'd.

" One calm, cold evening, when the moon was high,
" And rode sublime within the cloudless sky,
" She sat within her hut, nor seem'd to feel
" Or cold or want, but turn'd her idle wheel,
" And with sad song its melancholy tone
" Mix'd, all unconscious that she dwelt alone.

" But none will harm her—or who, willing, can?
" She is too wretched to have fear of man—
" Not man! but something, if it should appear,
" That once was man—that something did she fear.

" No causeless terror!—In that moon's clear light
" It came, and seem'd a parley to invite;
" It was no hollow voice—no brushing by
" Of a strange being, who escapes the eye—
" No cold or thrilling touch, that will but last
" While we can think, and then for ever past.
" But this sad face—though not the same, she knew
" Enough the same to prove the vision true—
" Look'd full upon her!—Starting in affright
" She fled, her wildness doubling at the sight;
" With shrieks of terror, and emotion strong,
" She pass'd it by, and madly rush'd along
" To the bare rocks—while David, who that day
" Had left his ship at anchor in the bay,
" Had seen his friends who yet survived, and heard
" Of her who loved him, and who thus appear'd:
" He tried to soothe her, but retired afraid,
" T' approach, and left her to return for aid.

" None came! and Rachel in the morn was found
" Turning her wheel, without its spindles, round,
" With household look of care, low singing to the sound.

" Since that event she is what you have seen,
" But time and habit make her more serene,
" The edge of anguish blunted—yet, it seems,
" Sea, ships, and sailors' miseries are her dreams."

TALE V.

VILLARS.

Poet.—Know you the fate of Villars?—
Friend.—What! the lad
At school so fond of solitude, and sad;
Who broke our bounds because he scorn'd a guide,
And would walk lonely by the river's side?

P.—The same!—who rose at midnight to behold
The moonbeams shedding their ethereal gold;
Who held our sports and pleasures in disgrace,
For Guy of Warwick, and old Chevy Chace.

F.—Who sought for friendships, gave his generous heart
To every boy who chose to act the part;
Or judged he felt it—not aware that boys
Have poor conceit of intellectual joys:
Theirs is no season for superfluous friends,
And none they need but those whom Nature lends.

P.—But he, too, loved?—
F.—Oh! yes; his friend betray'd
The tender passion for the angel-maid.
Some child, whose features he at church had seen,
Became his bosom's and his fancy's queen;
Some favourite look was on his mind impress'd—
His warm and fruitful fondness gave the rest.

P.—He left his father?—
F.—Yes! and rambled round
The land on foot—I know not what he found.
Early he came to his paternal land,
And took the course he had in rambling plann'd.
Ten years we lost him: he was then employ'd
In the wild schemes that he, perhaps, enjoy'd.
His mode of life, when he to manhood grew,
Was all his own—its shape disclosed to few.

Our grave, stern dames, who know the deeds of all,
Say that some damsels owe to him their fall;
And, though a Christian in his creed profess'd,
He had some heathen notions in his breast.
Yet we may doubt; for women, in his eyes,
Were high and glorious, queens and deities:
But he, perhaps, adorer and yet man,
Transgress'd yet worshipp'd. There are those who can.

Near him a Widow's mansion he survey'd—
The lovely mother of a lovelier Maid:
Not great their wealth, though they were proud to claim
Alliance with a house of noblest name.

Now, had I skill, I would right fain devise
To bring the highborn spinster to your eyes.

I could discourse of lip, and chin, and cheek,
But you would see no picture as I speak.
Such colours cannot—mix them as I may—
Paint you this nymph—We 'll try a different way.

First take Calista, in her glowing charms,
Ere yet she sank within Lothario's arms,
Endued with beauties ripe, and large desires,
And all that feels delight, and that inspires:
Add Cleopatra's great yet tender soul,
Her boundless pride, her fondness of control,
Her daring spirit, and her wily art,
That, though it tortures, yet commands the heart;
Add woman's anger for a lover's slight,
And the revenge that insult will excite;
Add looks for veils, that she at will could wear,
As Juliet fond, as Imogen sincere,—
Like Portia grave, sententious, and design'd
For high affairs, or gay as Rosalind;—
Catch, if you can, some notion of the dame,
And let Matilda serve her for a name.

Think next how Villars saw the enchanting maid,
And how he loved, pursued, adored, obey'd—
Obey'd in all except the dire command
No more to dream of that bewitching hand.
His love provoked her scorn, his wealth she spurn'd,
And frowns for praise, contempt for prayer return'd;
But, proud yet shrewd, the wily sex despise
The would-be husband—yet the votary prize.
As Roman conquerors of their triumph vain,
Saw humbled monarchs in their pompous train,
Who, when no more they swell'd the show of pride,
In secret sorrow'd, or in silence died;
So, when our friend adored the Beauty's shrine,
She mark'd the act, and gave the nod divine;
And strove with scatter'd smiles, yet scarcely strove,
To keep the lover, while she scorn'd his love.

These, and his hope, the doubtful man sustain'd;
For who that loves believes himself disdain'd?—
Each look, each motion, by his fondness read,
Became Love's food, and greater fondness bred;
The pettiest favour was to him the sign
Of secret love, and said, "I 'll yet be thine!"
One doleful year she held the captive swain,
Who felt and cursed, and wore and bless'd, the chain;
Who pass'd a thousand galling insults by,
For one kind glance of that ambiguous eye.

P.—Well! time, perhaps, might to the coldest heart
Some gentle thought of one so fond impart;
And pride itself has often favour shown
To what it governs, and can call its own.

F.—Thus were they placed, when to the village came
That lordly stranger whom I need not name;
Known since too well, but then as rich and young,
Untried his prowess, and his crimes unsung.
Smooth was his speech, and show'd a gentle mind,
Deaf to his praise, and to his merits blind;
But raised by woman's smile, and pleased with all mankind.

At humble distance he this fair survey'd,
Read her high temper, yet adored the Maid;
Far off he gazed, as if afraid to meet,
Or show the hope her anger would defeat:
Awful his love, and kept a guarded way,
Afraid to venture, till it finds it may.
And soon it found! nor could the Lady's pride
Her triumph bury, or her pleasure hide.

And jealous Love, that ever looks to spy
The dreaded wandering of a lady's eye,
Perceived with anguish that the prize long sought
A sudden rival from his hopes had caught.
Still Villars loved; at length, in strong despair,
O'er-tortured passion thus preferr'd its prayer:—
"Life of my life! at once my fate decree—
"I wait my death, or more than life, from thee:
"I have no arts, nor powers, thy soul to move,
"But doting constancy and boundless love;
"This is my all: had I the world to give,
"Thine were its throne—now bid me die or live!"

"Or die or live"—the gentle Lady cried—
"As suits thee best; that point thyself decide.
"But if to death thou hast thyself decreed,
"Then like a man perform the manly deed;
"The well-charged pistol to the ear apply,
"Make loud report, and like a hero die:
"Let rogues and rats on ropes and poison seize—
"Shame not thy friends by petty death like these;
"Sure we must grieve at what thou think'st to do,
"But spare us blushes for the manner too!"

Then with inviting smiles she turn'd aside,
Allay'd his anger, and consoled his pride.

Oft had the fickle fair beheld with scorn
The unhappy man bewilder'd and forlorn,
Then with one softening glance of those bright eyes
Restored his spirit, and dispersed his sighs.
Oft had I seen him on the lea below,
As feelings moved him, walking quick or slow:
Now a glad thought, and now a doleful, came,
And he adored or cursed the changeful dame,
Who was to him as cause is to effect—
Poor tool of pride, perverseness, and neglect!
Upon thy rival were her thoughts bestow'd,
Ambitious love within her bosom glow'd;
And oft she wish'd, and strong was her desire,
The Lord could love her like the faithful Squire;
But she was rivall'd in that noble breast—
He loved her passing well, but not the best,
For self reign'd there: but still he call'd her fair,
And woo'd the Muse his passion to declare.
His verses all were flaming, all were fine;
With sweetness, nay with sense, in every line—

Not as Lord Byron would have done the thing,
But better far than lords are used to sing.
It pleased the Maid, and she, in very truth,
Loved, in Calista's love, the noble youth;
Not like sweet Juliet, with that pure delight,
Fond and yet chaste, enraptured and yet right;
Not like the tender Imogen, confined
To one, but one! the true, the wedded mind;
True, one preferr'd our sighing nymph as these,
But thought not, like them, one alone could please.

Time pass'd, nor yet the youthful peer proposed
To end his suit, nor his had Villars closed;
Fond hints the one, the other cruel bore;
That was more cautious, this was kind the more:
Both for soft moments waited—that to take
Of these advantage; fairly this to make.
These moments came—or so my Lord believed—
He dropp'd his mask; and both were undeceived.
She saw the vice that would no longer feign,
And he an angry beauty's pure disdain.

Villars that night had in my ear confess'd,
He thought himself her spaniel and her jest.
He saw his rival of his goddess sure,
"But then," he cried, "her virtue is secure;
"Should he offend, I haply may obtain
"The high reward of vigilance and pain;
"Till then I take, and on my bended knee,
"Scraps from the banquet, gleanings of the tree."

Pitying, I smiled; for I had known the time
Of Love insulted—constancy my crime.
Not thus our friend: for him the morning shone,
In tenfold glory, as for him alone;
He wept, expecting still reproof to meet,
And all that was not cruel count as sweet.
Back he return'd, all eagerness and joy,
Proud as a prince, and restless as a boy.
He sought to speak, but could not aptly find
Words for his use, they enter'd not his mind;
So full of bliss, that wonder and delight
Seem'd in those happy moments to unite.
He was like one who gains, but dreads to lose,
A prize that seems to vanish as he views:
And in his look was wildness and alarm—
Like a sad conjuror who forgets his charm,
And, when the demon at the call appears,
Cannot command the spirit for his fears:
So Villars seem'd by his own bliss perplex'd,
And scarcely knowing what would happen next.

But soon, a witness to their vows, I saw
The maiden his, if not by love, by law;
The bells proclaim'd it—merry call'd by those
Who have no foresight of their neighbours' woes.
How proudly show'd the man his lovely bride,
Demurely pacing, pondering, at his side!
While all the loving maids around declared
That faith and constancy deserved reward.
The baffled Lord retreated from the scene
Of so much gladness, with a world of spleen;
And left the wedded couple, to protest
That he no fear, that she no love possess'd,
That all his vows were scorn'd, and all his hope a jest.

Then fell the oaks to let in light of day,
Then rose the mansion that we now survey,
Then all the world flock'd gaily to the scene
Of so much splendour, and its splendid queen;
But whether all within the gentle breast
Of him, of her, was happy or at rest,—
Whether no lonely sigh confess'd regret,
Was then unknown, and is a secret yet;
And we may think, in common duty bound,
That no complaint is made where none is found.

Then came the Rival to his villa down,
Lost to the pleasures of the heartless town;
Famous he grew, and he invited all
Whom he had known to banquet at the Hall;
Talk'd of his love, and said, with many a sigh,
"'T is death to lose her, and I wish to die."

Twice met the parties; but with cool disdain
In her, in him with looks of awe and pain.
Villars had pity, and conceived it hard
That true regret should meet with no regard.—
"Smile, my Matilda! virtue should inflict
"No needless pain, nor be so sternly strict."

The Hall was furnish'd in superior style,
And money wanted from our sister isle;
The lady-mother to the husband sued—
"Alas! that care should on our bliss intrude!
"You must to Ireland; our possessions there
"Require your presence, nay, demand your care.
"My pensive daughter begs with you to sail;
"But spare your wife, nor let the wish prevail."

He went, and found upon his Irish land
Cases and griefs he could not understand.
Some glimmering light at first his prospect cheer'd—
Clear it was not, but would in time be clear'd;
But when his lawyers had their efforts made,
No mind in man the darkness could pervade;
'T was palpably obscure: week after week
He sought for comfort, but was still to seek.
At length, impatient to return, he strove
No more with law, but gave the rein to love;
And to his Lady and their native shore
Vow'd to return, and thence to turn no more.

While yet on Irish ground in trouble kept,
The Husband's terrors in his toils had slept;
But he no sooner touch'd the British soil
Than jealous terrors took the place of toil.—
"Where has she been? and how attended? Who
"Has watch'd her conduct, and will vouch her true?
"She sigh'd at parting, but methought her sighs
"Were more profound than would from nature rise;
"And though she wept as never wife before,
"Yet were her eyelids neither swell'd nor sore.
"Her lady-mother has a good repute,
"As watchful dragon of forbidden fruit;
"Yet dragons sleep, and mothers have been known
"To guard a daughter's secret as their own;
"Nor can the absent in their travel see
"How a fond wife and mother may agree.

" Suppose the lady is most virtuous !—then,
" What can she know of the deceits of men ?
" Of all they plan she neither thinks nor cares,
" But keeps, good lady ! at her books and prayers.

" In all her letters there are love, respect,
" Esteem, regret, affection, all correct—
" Too much—she fears that I should see neglect ;
" And there are fond expressions, but unlike
" The rest, as meant to be observed and strike ;
" Like quoted words, they have the show of art,
" And come not freely from the gentle heart—
" Adopted words, and brought from memory's store,
" When the chill faltering heart supplies no more :
" 'T is so the hypocrite pretends to feel,
" And speaks the words of earnestness and zeal.

" Hers was a sudden, though a sweet consent ;
" May she not now as suddenly repent ?
" My rival's vices drove him from her door ;
" But hates she vice as truly as before ?
" How do I know, if he should plead again,
" That all her scorn and anger would remain ?

" Oh ! words of folly—*is it thus* I deem
" Of the chaste object of my fond esteem ?
" Away with doubt ! to jealousy adieu !
" I know her fondness, and believe her true.

" Yet why that haste to furnish every need,
" And send me forth with comfort and with speed ?
" Yes ; for she dreaded that the winter's rage
" And our frail hoy should on the seas engage.

" But that vile girl ! I saw a treacherous eye
" Glance on her mistress ! so demure and sly,
" So forward too—and would Matilda's pride
" Admit of that, if there was nought beside ?"

Such, as he told me, were the doubt, the dread,
By jealous fears on observations fed.

Home he proceeded : there remain'd to him
But a few miles—the night was wet and dim ;
Thick, heavy dews descended on the ground,
And all was sad and melancholy round.

While thinking thus, an inn's far-gleaming fire
Caused new emotions in the pensive Squire.
" Here I may learn, and seeming careless too,
" If all is well, ere I my way pursue.
" How fare you, landlord ?—how, my friend, are all ?—
" Have you not seen—my people at the hall ?
" Well, I may judge——"
" Oh ! yes, your Honour, well,
" As Joseph knows ; and he was sent to tell."—
" How ! sent—I miss'd him—Joseph, do you say ?
" Why sent, if well ?—I miss'd him on the way."

There was a poacher on the chimney-seat,
A gipsy, conjuror, smuggler, stroller, cheat.
The Squire had fined him for a captured hare,
Whipp'd and imprison'd—he had felt the fare,
And he remember'd : " Will your Honour know
" How does my Lady ? that myself can show.
" On Monday early—for your Honour sees
" The poor man must not slumber at his ease,
" Nor must he into woods and coverts lurk,
" Nor work alone, but must be seen to work ;
" 'T is not, your Honour knows, sufficient now
" For us to live, but we must prove it—how.
" Stay, please your Honour,—I was early up,
" And forth without a morsel of a sup.
" There was my Lady's carriage—Whew ! it drove
" As if the horses had been spurr'd by Love."

" A poet, John !" said Villars—feebly said,
Confused with fear, and humbled and dismay'd—
" And where this carriage ? — but, my heart, enough—
" Why do I listen to the villain's stuff ?—
" And where wert thou ? and what the spur of thine
" That led thee forth ?—we surely may divine !"

" Hunger, your Honour ! I and my poor wife
" Have now no other in our wane of life.
" Were Phœbe handsome, and were I a Squire,
" I might suspect her, and young Lords admire."—
" What ! rascal——" —" Nay, your Honour, on my word,
" I should be jealous of that fine young Lord ;
" Yet him my Lady in the carriage took,
" But innocent—I'd swear it on the book."

" You villain, swear !"—for still he wish'd to stay,
And hear what more the fellow had to say.
" 'Phœbe,' said I, 'a rogue that had a heart
" 'To do the deed would make his Honour smart.'
" Says Phœbe, wisely, 'Think you, would he go,
" 'If he were jealous, from my Lady !—No.' "

This was too much ! poor Villars left the inn,
To end the grief that did but then begin.
" With my Matilda in the coach !—what lies
" Will the vile rascal in his spleen devise ?
" Yet this is true, that on some vile pretence
" Men may entrap the purest innocence.
" He saw my fears—alas ! I am not free
" From every doubt—but, no ! it cannot be."

Villars moved slow, moved quick, as check'd by fear,
Or urged by Love, and drew his mansion near.
Light burst upon him, yet he fancied gloom,
Nor came a twinkling from Matilda's room.
" What then ? 't is idle to expect that all
" Should be produced at jealous fancy's call ;
" How ! the park-gate wide open ! who would dare
" Do this, if her presiding glance were there ?
" But yet, by chance—I know not what to think,
" For thought is hell, and I'm upon the brink !
" Not for a thousand worlds, ten thousand lives,
" Would I —— Oh ! what depends upon our wives !
" Pains, labours, terrors, all would I endure,
" Yes, all but this—and this, could I be sure."

Just then a light within the window shone,
And show'd a lady, weeping and alone.
His heart beat fondly—on another view,
It beat more strongly, and in terror too—
It was his Sister!—and there now appear'd
A servant creeping like a man that fear'd.
He spoke with terror—"Sir, did Joseph tell?
"Have you not met him?"—
"Is your Lady well?"
"Well? Sir—your Honour——"
"Heaven and earth! what mean
"Your stupid questions? I have nothing seen,
"Nor heard nor know, nor—do, good Thomas, speak!
"Your mistress——"
"Sir, has gone from home a week—
"My Lady, sir, your sister——"
But, too late
Was this—my Friend had yielded to his fate.
He heard the truth, became serene and mild,
Patient and still, as a corrected child;
At once his spirit with his fortune fell
To the last ebb, and whisper'd—It is well.

Such was his fall; and grievous the effect!
From henceforth all things fell into neglect—
The mind no more alert, the form no more erect.

Villars long since, as he indulged his spleen
By lonely travel on the coast, had seen
A large old mansion suffer'd to decay
In some law-strife, and slowly drop away.
Dark elms around the constant herons bred,
Those the marsh dykes the neighbouring ocean fed;
Rocks near the coast no shipping would allow,
And stubborn heath around forbade the plough;
Dull must the scene have been in years of old,
But now was wildly dismal to behold—
One level sadness! marsh, and heath, and sea,
And, save these high dark elms, nor plant nor tree.

In this bleak ruin Villars found a room,
Square, small, and lofty—seat of grief and gloom:
A sloping skylight on the white wall threw,
When the sun set, a melancholy hue;
The hall of Vathek has a room so bare,
So small, so sad, so form'd to nourish care.
"Here," said the Traveller, "all so dark within,
"And dull without, a man might mourn for sin,
"Or punish sinners—here a wanton wife
"And vengeful husband might be cursed for life."

His mind was now in just that wretched state,
That deems Revenge our right, and crime our fate.
All other views he banish'd from his soul,
And let this tyrant vex him and control;
Life he despised, and had that Lord defied,
But that he long'd for vengeance ere he died.
The law he spurn'd, the combat he declined,
And to his purpose all his soul resign'd.

Full fifteen months had pass'd, and we began
To have some hope of the returning man:
Now to his steward of his small affairs
He wrote, and mention'd leases and repairs;
But yet his soul was on its scheme intent,
And but a moment to his interest lent.

His faithless wife and her triumphant peer
Despised his vengeance, and disdain'd to fear;
In splendid lodgings near the town they dwelt,
Nor fears from wrath, nor threats from conscience, felt.

Long time our friend had watch'd, and much had paid
For vulgar minds, who lent his vengeance aid.
At length, one evening, late returning home,
Thoughtless and fearless of the ills to come,
The Wife was seized, when void of all alarm,
And vainly trusting to a footman's arm:
Death in his hand, the Husband stood in view,
Commanding silence, and obedience too;
Forced to his carriage, sinking at his side,
Madly he drove her—Vengeance was his guide.

All in that ruin Villars had prepared,
And meant her fate and sorrow to have shared;
There he design'd they should for ever dwell,
The weeping pair of a monastic cell.

An ancient couple from their cottage went,
Won by his pay, to this imprisonment:
And all was order'd in his mind—the pain
He must inflict, the shame she must sustain;
But such his gentle spirit, such his love,
The proof might fail of all he meant to prove.

Features so dear had still maintain'd their sway,
And looks so loved had taught him to obey:
Rage and Revenge had yielded to the sight
Of charms that waken wonder and delight;
The harsher passions from the heart had flown,
And Love regain'd his subject and his throne.

TALE VI.

THE FAREWELL AND RETURN.[1]

I.

I AM of age, and now, no more the Boy,
Am ready Fortune's favours to enjoy,
Were they too ready; but, with grief I speak,
Mine is the fortune that I yet must seek.

[1] [This Tale, and a number of others, were originally designed for a separate volume, to be entitled 'The Farewell and Return.' In a letter to Mrs. Leadbetter, written in 1823, the poet says—"In my 'Farewell and Return' I suppose a young man to take leave of his native place, and to exchange *farewells* with his friends and acquaintance there—in short, with as many characters as I have fancied I could manage. These, and their several situations and prospects, being briefly sketched, an interval is supposed to elapse; and our youth, a youth no more, *returns* to the scene of his early days. Twenty years have passed; and the interest, if there be any, consists in the completion, more or less unexpected, of the history of each person to whom he had originally bidden farewell."

The reader will find the Tales written on this plan divided each into two or more sections; and will easily perceive where the *farewell* terminates, and the *return* begins.]

And let me seek it; there 's the world around—
And if not sought it never can be found.
It will not come if I the chace decline;
Wishes and wants will never make it mine.
Then let me shake these lingering fears away;
What one day must be, let it be to-day;
Lest courage fail ere I the search commence,
And resolution pall upon suspense.

Yet while amid these well-known scenes I dwell,
Let me to friends and neighbours bid farewell.

First to our men of wealth—these are but few—
In duty bound I humbly bid adieu.
This is not painful, for they know me not,
Fortune in different states has placed our lot;
It is not pleasant, for full well I know
The lordly pity that the rich bestow—
A proud contemptuous pity, by whose aid
Their own triumphant virtues are display'd.—
" Going, you say; and what intends the Lad;
" To seek his fortune? Fortune? is he mad?
" Has he the knowledge? is he duly taught?
" I think we know how Fortune should be sought.
" Perhaps he takes his chance to sink or swim,
" Perhaps he dreams of Fortune's seeking him!
" Life is his lottery, and away he flies,
" Without a ticket, to obtain his prize:
" But never man acquired a weighty sum
" Without foreseeing whence it was to come."

Fortunes are made, if I the facts may state,—
Though poor myself, I know the fortunate:
First, there 's a knowledge of the way from whence
Good fortune comes—and that is sterling sense:
Then perseverance, never to decline
The chace of riches till the prey is thine;
And firmness, never to be drawn away
By any passion from that noble prey—
By love, ambition, study, travel, fame,
Or the vain hope that lives upon a name."

The whistling Boy that holds the plough,
Lured by the tale that soldiers tell,
Resolves to part, yet knows not how
To leave the land he loves so well.
He now rejects the thought, and now
Looks o'er the lea, and sighs " Farewell!"

Farewell! the pensive Maiden cries,
Who dreams of London, dreams awake—
But when her favourite Lad she spies,
With whom she loved her way to take,
Then Doubts within her soul arise,
And equal Hopes her bosom shake!

Thus, like the Boy, and like the Maid,
I wish to go, yet tarry here,
And now resolved, and now afraid:
To minds disturb'd old views appear
In melancholy charms array'd,
And, once indifferent, now are dear.
How shall I go, my fate to learn—
And, oh! how taught shall I return?

II.

Yes!—twenty years have pass'd, and I am come,
Unknown, unwelcomed, to my early home—
A stranger, striving in my walks to trace
The youthful features in some aged face.
On as I move, some curious looks I read;
We pause a moment, doubt, and then proceed:
They 're like what once I saw, but not the same;
I lose the air, the features, and the name;
Yet something seems like knowledge, but the change
Confuses me, and all in him is strange:
That bronzed old Sailor, with his wig awry—
Sure he will know me! No, he passes by.
They seem like me in doubt; but they can call
Their friends around them! I am lost to all.

The very place is alter'd. What I left
Seems of its space and dignity bereft:
The streets are narrow, and the buildings mean;
Did I, or Fancy, leave them broad and clean?
The ancient church, in which I felt a pride,
As struck by magic, is but half as wide;
The tower is shorter, the sonorous bell
Tells not the hour as it was wont to tell;
The market dwindles, every shop and stall
Sinks in my view; there 's littleness in all.
Mine is the error; prepossess'd I see;
And all the change I mourn is change in me.

One object only is the same; the sight
Of the wide Ocean by the moon's pale light,
With her long ray of glory, that we mark
On the wild waves when all beside is dark:
This is the work of Nature, and the eye
In vain the boundless prospect would descry;
What mocks our view cannot contracted be;
We cannot lessen what we cannot see.

Would I could now a single Friend behold,
Who would the yet mysterious facts unfold,
That Time yet spares, and to a stranger show
Th' events he wishes, and yet fears, to know.

Much by myself I might in listening glean;
Mix'd with the crowd, unmark'd, if not unseen,
Uninterrupted I might ramble on,
Nor cause an interest, nor a thought, in one;
For who looks backward to a being toss'd
About the world, forgotten long, and lost?
For whom departing not a tear was shed,
Who disappear'd, was missing, and was dead!
Save that he left no grave, where some might pass,
And ask each other who that being was.

I, as a ghost invisible, can stray
Among the crowd, and cannot lose my way;
My ways are where the voice of man is known,
Though no occasion offers for my own:
My eager mind to fill with food I seek,
And, like the ghost, await for one to speak.

See I not One whom I before have seen?
That face, though now untroubled and serene,

That air, though steady now, that look, though tame,
Pertain to one, whom though I doubt to name,
Yet was he not a dashing youth and wild,
Proud as a man, and haughty when a child?
Talents were his; he was in nature kind,
With lofty, strong, and independent mind;
His father wealthy, but, in very truth,
He was a rash, untamed, expensive youth;
And, as I now remember the report,
Told how his father's money he would sport:
Yet in his dress and manner now appears
No sign of faults that stain'd his earlier years;
Mildness there seems, and marks of sober sense,
That bear no token of that wild expense
Such as to ruin leads!—I may mistake,
Yet may, perchance, a useful friendship make!
He looks as one whom I should not offend,
Address'd as him whom I would make a friend.

Men with respect attend him.—He proceeds
To yonder public room—why, then he reads.

Suppose me right—a mighty change is wrought;
But Time ere now has care and caution taught.
May I address him? And yet, why afraid?
Deny he may, but he will not upbraid,
Nor must I lose him, for I want his aid.

Propitious fate! beyond my hope I find
A being well-inform'd, and much inclined
To solve my many doubts, and ease my anxious mind.

Now shall we meet, and he will give reply
To all I ask!—How full of fears am I;
Poor, nervous, trembling!—What have I to fear?
Have I a wife, a child, one creature here,
Whose health would bring me joy, whose death would claim a tear?

This is the time appointed, this the place:
Now shall I learn how some have run their race
With honour, some with shame; and I shall know
How man behaves in Fortune's ebb and flow;—
What wealth or want, what trouble, sorrow, joy,
Have been allotted to the girls and boy
Whom I left laughing at the ills of life,—
Now the grave father, or the awful wife.
Then shall I hear how tried the wise and good!
How fall'n the house that once in honour stood!
And moving accidents, from war and fire and flood!

These shall I hear, if to his promise true;
His word is pledged to tell me all he knew
Of living men; and memory then will trace
Those who no more with living men have place,
As they were borne to their last quiet homes—
This shall I learn!—And lo! my Teacher comes.

TALE VII.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE SCHOOLFELLOW.

I.

Yes! I must leave thee, brother of my heart;
The world demands us, and at length we part:
Thou whom that heart, since first it felt, approved—
I thought not why, nor question'd how, I loved;
In my first thoughts, first notions, and first cares,
Associate; partner in my mind's affairs,
In my young dreams, my fancies ill-express'd,
But well-conceived, and to the heart address'd.
A fellow-reader in the books I read,
A fellow-mourner in the tears I shed,
A friend, partaking every grief and joy,
A lively, frank, engaging, generous boy.

At school each other's prompters, day by day
Companions in the frolic or the fray;
Prompt in disputes—we never sought the cause,
The laws of friendship were our only laws;
We ask'd not how or why the strife began,
But David's foe was foe to Jonathan.

In after-years my Friend, the elder boy,
Would speak of Love, its tumult and its joy;
A new and strong emotion, thus impress'd,
Prepared for pain to come the yielding breast;
For though no object then the fancy found,
She dreamt of darts, and gloried at the wound;
Smooth verse and tender tales the spirit moved,
And ere the Chloes came the Strephons loved.

This is the Friend I leave; for he remains
Bound to his home by strong but viewless chains:
Nor need I fear that his aspiring soul
Will fail his adverse fortunes to control,
Or lose the fame he merits: yet awhile
The clouds may lower—but then his sun will smile.
Oh! Time, thou teller of men's fortunes, lend
Thy aid, and be propitious to my Friend!
Let me behold him prosperous, and his name
Enroll'd among the darling sons of Fame;
In love befriend him, and be his the bride,
Proud of her choice, and of her lord the pride.
"So shall my little bark attendant sail"—
(As Pope has sung)—and prosperous be the gale!

II.

He is not here: the Youth I loved so well
Dwells in some place where kindred spirits dwell:
But I shall learn. Oh! tell me of my Friend,
With whom I hoped life's evening-calm to spend;
With whom was spent the morn, the happy morn,
When gay conceits and glorious views are born;
With whom conversing I began to find
The early stirrings of an active mind,
That, done the tasks and lessons of the day,
Sought for new pleasures in our untried way;
And stray'd in fairy land, where much we long'd to stray.

Here he abides not! could not surely fix
In this dull place, with these dull souls to mix:
He finds his place where lively spirits meet,
And loftier souls from baser kind retreat.

First, of my early Friend I gave the name,
Well known to me, and, as I judged, to Fame;
My grave informer doubted, then replied,
"That Lad!—why, yes!—some ten years since he died."

P.—Died! and unknown! the man I loved so well!
But is this all? the whole that you can tell
Of one so gifted?—
F.—Gifted! why, in truth,
You puzzle me; how gifted was the Youth?
I recollect him, now—his long, pale face—
He dress'd in drab, and walk'd as in a race.

P. Good Heaven! what did I not of him expect?
And is this all indeed you recollect—
Of wit that charm'd me, with delightful ease—
And gay good-humour that must ever please—
His taste, his genius! know you nought of these?

F.—No, not of these:—but stop! in passing near,
I've heard his flute—it was not much to hear:
As for his genius—let me not offend—
I never had a genius for a friend,
And doubt of yours; but still he did his best,
And was a decent Lad:—there let him rest!

He lies in peace, with all his humble race,
And has no stone to mark his burial-place;
Nor left he that which to the world might show
That he was one that world was bound to know,
For aught he gave it.—Here his story ends!

P.—And is this all? This character my Friend's!
That may, alas! be mine——"*a decent Lad!*"—
The very phrase would make a Poet mad!
And he is gone!—Oh! proudly did I think
That we together at that fount should drink,
Together climb the steep ascent of Fame,
Together gain an ever-during name,
And give due credit to our native home—
Yet here he lies, without a name or tomb;
Perhaps not honour'd by a single tear,
Just enter'd in a parish-register,
With common dust, forgotten to remain:
And shall I seek what thou couldst not obtain—
A name for men when I am dead to speak?—
Oh! let me something more substantial seek;
Let me no more on man's poor praise depend,
But learn one lesson from my buried Friend.

TALE VIII.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

BARNABY, THE SHOPMAN.

I.

FAREWELL! to *him* whom just across my way
I see his shop attending day by day;
Save on the Sunday, when he duly goes
To his own church, in his own Sunday clothes.
Young though he is, yet careful there he stands,
Opening his shop with his own ready hands;
Nor scorns the broom that to and fro he moves,
Cleaning his way, for cleanliness he loves,
But yet preserves not: in his zeal for trade
He has his shop an ark for all things made;
And there, in spite of his all-guarding eye,
His sundry wares in strange confusion lie—
Delightful token of the haste that keeps
Those mingled matters in their shapeless heaps;
Yet ere he rests he takes them all away,
And order smiles on the returning day.

Most ready tradesman he of men! alive
To all that turns to money—he must thrive.
Obsequious, civil, loath t' offend or trust,
And full of awe for greatness—thrive he must;
For well he knows to creep, and he in time,
By wealth assisted, will aspire to climb.

Painstaking lad he was, and with his slate
For hours in useful meditation sate;
Puzzled, and seizing every boy at hand,
To make him—hard the labour!—understand:
But when of learning he enough possess'd
For his affairs, who would might learn the rest;
All else was useless when he had obtain'd
Knowledge that told him what he lost or gain'd.
He envied no man for his learning; he
Who was not rich was poor with *Barnaby:*
But he for envy has no thought to spare,
Nor love nor hate—his heart is in his ware.

Happy the man whose greatest pleasure lies
In the fair trade by which he hopes to rise!
To him how bright the opening day, how bless'd
The busy noon, how sweet the evening rest!
To him the nation's state is all unknown,
Whose watchful eye is ever on his own.
You talk of patriots, men who give up all,
Yea, life itself, at their dear country's call!
He look'd on such as men of other date,
Men to admire, and not to imitate;
They as his Bible-Saints to him appear'd,
Lost to the world, but still to be revered.

Yet there 's a Widow, in a neighbouring street,
Whom he contrives in Sunday-dress to meet;
Hers house and land; and these are more delight
To him than learning, in the proverb's spite.

The Widow sees at once the Trader's views,
And means to soothe him, flatter, and refuse:

Yet there are moments when a woman fails
In such design, and so the man prevails.
Love she has not, but, in a guardless hour,
May lose her purpose, and resign her power;
Yet all such hazard she resolves to run,
Pleased to be woo'd, and fearless to be won.

Lovers like these, as dresses thrown aside,
Are kept and shown to feed a woman's pride.
Old-fashion'd, ugly, call them what she will,
They serve as signs of her importance still.
She thinks they might inferior forms adorn,
And does not love to hear them used with scorn;
Till on some day when she has need of dress,
And none at hand to serve her in distress,
She takes th' insulted robe, and turns about;
Long-hidden beauties one by one peer out.
"'T is not so bad! See, Jenny—I declare
"'T is pretty well, and then 't is lasting wear;
"And what is fashion?—if a woman 's wise,
"She will the substance, not the shadow, prize;
"'T is a choice silk, and, if I put it on,
"Off go these ugly trappings every one."
The dress is worn, a friendly smile is raised,
But the good lady for her courage praised—
Till wonder dies. The dress is worn with pride,
And not one trapping yet is cast aside.

Meanwhile the man his six-day toil renews,
And on the seventh he worships Heaven, and woos.

I leave thee, Barnaby; and if I see
Thee once again, a Burgess thou wilt be.

II.

But how is this? I left a thriving man,
Hight Barnaby! when he to trade began—
Trade his delight and hope; and, if alive,
Doubt I had none that Barnaby would thrive:
Yet here I see him, sweeping, as before,
The very dust from forth the very door.
So would a miser! but, methinks, the shop
Itself is meaner—has he made a stop?

I thought I should at least a burgess see,
And lo! 't is but an older Barnaby;
With face more wrinkled, with a coat as bare
As coats of his once begging kindred were;
Brush'd to the thread that is distinctly seen,
And beggarly would be, but that 't is clean.

Why, how is this? Upon a closer view,
The shop is narrow'd: it is cut in two.
Is all that business from its station fled?
Why, Barnaby! thy very shop is dead!
Now, what the cause my Friend will soon relate—
And what the fall from that predicted fate.

F. A common cause: it seems his lawful gains
Came slowly forth, and came with care and pains.
These he, indeed, was willing to bestow,
But still his progress to his point was slow,
And might be quicken'd, "could he cheat the eyes
"Of all those rascal-officers and spies,
"The Customs' greedy tribe, the wolves of the Excise."

Tea, coffee, spirits, laces, silks, and spice,
And sundry drugs that bear a noble price,
Are bought for little, but ere sold, the things
Are deeply charged for duty of the king's.
Now, if the servants of this king would keep
At a kind distance, or would wink or sleep,
Just till the goods in safety were disposed.
Why, then his labours would be quickly closed.
True! some have thriven,—but they the laws defied,
And shunn'd the powers they should have satisfied!

Their way he tried, and, finding some success,
His heart grew stouter, and his caution less;
Then—for why doubt, when placed in Fortune's way?—
There was a bank, and that was sure to pay.
Yes, every partner in that thriving bank
He judged a man of a superior rank.
Were *he* but one in a concern so grand—
Why! he might build a house and buy him land;
Then, too, the Widow, whom he loved so well,
Would not refuse with such a man to dwell;
And, to complete his views, he might be made
A Borough-Justice, when he ceased to trade;
For he had known—well pleased to know—a mayor
Who once had dealt in cheese and vinegar.

Who hastens to be rich resembles him
Who is resolved that he will quickly swim,
And trusts his full-blown bladders! He, indeed,
With these supported, moves along with speed:
He laughs at those whom untried depths alarm,
By caution led, and moved by strength of arm;
Till in mid-way, the way his folly chose,
His full-blown bladder bursts, and down he goes!
Or, if preserved, 't is by their friendly aid
Whom he despised as cautious and afraid.

Who could resist? Not Barnaby. Success
A while his pride exalted—to depress.
Three years he pass'd in feverish hopes and fears,
When fled the profits of the former years;
Shook by the law's *strong* arm, all he had gain'd
He dropp'd—and *hopeless, penniless* remain'd.

The cruel Widow, whom he yet pursued,
Was kind but cautious, then was stern and rude.
"Should wealth, now hers, from that dear man which came,
"Be thrown away to prop a smuggler's fame?"
She spake insulting; and with many a sigh,
The fallen Trader passed her mansion by.

Fear, shame, and sorrow, for a time endured,
Th' adventurous man was ruin'd, but was cured—
His weakness pitied, and his once good name
The means of his returning peace became.

He was assisted, to his shop withdrew,
Half let, half rented, and began anew,
To smile on custom, that in part return'd,
With the small gains that he no longer spurn'd.
Warn'd by the past, he rises with the day,
And tries to sweep off sorrow.——*Sweep away!*

TALE IX.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

JANE.

I.

KNOWN but of late, I yet am loath to leave
The gentle *Jane*, and wonder why I grieve—
Not for her wants, for she has no distress,
She has no suffering that her looks express,
Her air or manner—hers the mild good sense
That wins its way by making no pretence.

When yet a child, her dying mother knew
What, left by her, the widow'd man would do,
And gave her Jane, for she had power, enough
To live in ease—of love and care a proof.
Enabled thus, the maid is kind to all—
Is pious too, and that without a call.
Not that she doubts of calls that Heav'n has sent—
Calls to believe, or warnings to repent;
But that she rests upon the Word divine,
Without presuming on a dubious sign—
A sudden light, the momentary zeal
Of those who rashly hope and warmly feel;
These she rejects not, nor on these relies,
And neither feels the influence nor denies.
Upon the sure and written Word she trusts,
And by the Law Divine her life adjusts;
She blames not her who other creed prefers,
And all she asks is charity for hers.
Her great example is her gracious Lord;
Her hope his promise, and her guide his Word;
Her quiet alms are known to God alone,
Her left hand knows not what her right has done;
Her talents, not the few, she well improves,
And puts to use in labour that she loves.

Pensive, though good, I leave thee, gentle maid—
In thee confiding, of thy peace afraid,
In a strange world to act a trying part,
With a soft temper and a yielding heart!

II.

P.—How fares my gentle Jane, with spirit meek,
Whose fate with some foreboding care I seek;
Her whom I pitied in my pride, while she,
For many a cause more weighty, pitied me;
For she has wonder'd how the idle boy
His head or hands would usefully employ—
At least for thee his grateful spirit pray'd,
And now to ask thy fortune is afraid.—
How fares the gentle Jane?—

F.—Know first, she fares
As one who bade adieu to earthly cares;
As one by virtue guided, and who, tried
By man's deceit, has never lost her guide.

Her age I knew not, but it seem'd the age
When Love is wont a serious war to wage
In female hearts,—when hopes and fears are strong,
And 't is a fatal step to place them wrong;
For childish fancies now have ta'en their flight,
And love's impressions are no longer light.

Just at this time—what time I do not tell—
There came a Stranger in the place to dwell;
He seem'd as one who sacred truth reveres,
And like her own his sentiments and years;
His person manly, with engaging mien,
His spirit quiet, and his looks serene.
He kept from all disgraceful deeds aloof,
Severely tried, and found temptation-proof:
This was by most unquestion'd, and the few
Who made inquiry said report was true.

His very choice of our neglected place
Endear'd him to us—'t was an act of grace;
And soon to Jane, our unobtrusive maid,
In still respect was his attention paid;
Each in the other found what both approved,
Good sense and quiet manners: these they loved.

So came regard, and then esteem, and then
The kind of friendship women have with men:
At length 't was love, but candid, open, fair,
Such as became their years and character.

In their discourse religion had its place,
When he of doctrines talk'd, and she of grace.
He knew the different sects, the varying creeds,
While she, less learned, spake of virtuous deeds:
He dwelt on errors into which we fall,
She on the gracious remedy for all:
So between both, his knowledge and her own,
Was the whole Christian to perfection shown.
Though neither quite approved the other's part—
Hers without learning, his without a heart—
Still to each other they were dear, were good,
And all these matters kindly understood;
For Jane was liberal, and her friend could trust,—
"He thinks not with me! but is fair and just."

Her prudent lover to her man of law
Show'd how he lived: it seem'd without a flaw;
She saw their moderate means—content with what she saw.

Jane had no doubts—with so much to admire,
She judged it insult farther to inquire.
The lover sought—what lover brooks delay?—
For full assent, and for an early day—
And he would construe well the soft consenting Nay!

The day was near, and Jane, with book in hand,
Sat down to read—perhaps might understand:
For what prevented?—say, she seem'd to read;
When one there came, her own sad cause to plead;
A stranger she, who fearless named that cause—
A breach in love's and honour's sacred laws.

"In a far country, Lady, bleak and wild,
"Report has reached me! how art thou beguiled!
"Or dared he tell thee that for ten sad years
"He saw me struggling with fond hopes and fears?

"From my dear home he won me, bless'd and free!
"To be his victim."——"Madam, who is *he?*"
"Not yet thy husband, Lady: *no*! not yet;
"For he has first to pay a mighty debt."

"Speaks he not of religion?"—"So he speaks,
"When he the ruin of his victim seeks.
"How smooth and gracious were his words, how sweet—
"The fiend, his master, prompting his deceit!
"Me he with kind instruction led to trust
"In one who seem'd so grave, so kind, so just.
"Books to amuse me, and inform, he brought,
"Like that old serpent with temptation fraught;
"His like the precepts of the wise appear'd,
"Till I imbibed the vice I had not fear'd.
"By pleasant tales and dissertations gay
"He wiled the lessons of my youth away.

"Of moral duties he would talk, and prove
"They gave a sanction, and commanded love;
"His sober smile at forms and rites was shown,
"To make my mind depraved, and like his own.

"But wilt thou take him? wilt thou ruin take,
"With a grave robber, a religious rake?
"'T is not to serve thee, Lady, that I came—
"'T is not to claim him, 't is not to reclaim—
"But 't is that he may for my wrongs be paid,
"And feel the vengeance of the wretch he made.

"Not for myself I thy attention claim—
"My children dare not take their father's name:
"They know no parent's love—love will not dwell with shame.
"What law would force, he not without it gives,
"And hates each living wretch, because it lives!
"Yet, with these sinful stains, the man is mine:
"How will he curse me for this rash design!
"Yes—I will bear his curse, but him will not resign.

"I see thee grieved; but, Lady, what thy grief?
"It may be pungent, but it must be brief.
"Pious thou art; but what will profit thee,
"Match'd with a demon, woman's piety?
"Not for thy sake my wrongs and wrath I tell,
"Revenge I seek! but yet I wish thee well.
"And now I leave thee! Thou art warn'd by one,
"The rock on which her peace was wreck'd to shun."

The Lover heard; but not in time to stay
A woman's vengeance in its headlong way:
Yet he essay'd, with no unpractised skill,
To warp the judgment, or at least the will;
To raise such tumults in the poor weak heart,
That Jane, believing all—yet should not dare to part.

But there was Virtue in her mind that strove
With all his eloquence, and all her love;
He told what hope and frailty dared to tell,
And all was answer'd by a stern *Farewell!*

Home with his consort he return'd once more,
And they resumed the life they led before.

Not so our maiden. She, before resign'd,
Had now the anguish of a wounded mind—
And felt the languid grief that the deserted find:
On him she had reposed each worldly view,
And, when he fail'd, the world itself withdrew,
With all its prospects. Nothing could restore
To life its value; hope would live no more:
Pensive by nature, she can not sustain
The sneer of pity that the heartless feign;
But to the pressure of her griefs gives way,
A quiet victim, and a patient prey:
The one bright view that she had cherish'd dies,
And other hope must from the future rise.

She still extends to grief and want her aid,
And by the comfort she imparts is paid:
Death is her soul's relief: to him she flies
For consolation that this world denies.
No more to life's false promises she clings,
She longs to change this troubled state of things,
Till every rising morn the happier prospect brings.

TALE X.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE ANCIENT MANSION.

I.

To part is painful; nay, to bid adieu
E'en to a favourite spot is painful too.
That fine old Seat, with all those oaks around,
Oft have I view'd with reverence so profound,
As something sacred dwelt in that delicious ground.

There, with its tenantry about, reside
A genuine English race, the country's pride;
And now a Lady, last of all that race,
Is the departing spirit of the place.
Hers is the last of all that noble blood,
That flow'd through generations brave and good;
And if there dwells a native pride in her,
It is the pride of name and character.

True, she will speak, in her abundant zeal,
Of stainless honour; that she needs must feel;
She must lament that she is now the last
Of all who gave such splendour to the past.

Still are her habits of the ancient kind;
She knows the poor, the sick, the lame, the blind:
She holds, so she believes, her wealth in trust;
And being kind, with her, is being just.
Though soul and body she delights to aid,
Yet of her skill she 's prudently afraid:
So to her chaplain's care she *this* commends,
And when *that* craves, the village doctor sends.

At church attendance she requires of all
Who would be held in credit at the Hall;
A due respect to each degree she shows,
And pays the debt that every mortal owes;

'T is by opinion that respect is led,
The rich esteem because the poor are fed.

Her servants all, if so we may describe
That ancient, grave, observant, decent tribe,
Who with her share the blessings of the Hall,
Are kind but grave, are proud but courteous all—
Proud of their lucky lot! Behold, how stands
That grey-hair'd butler, waiting her commands;
The Lady dines, and every day he feels
That his good mistress falters in her meals.
With what respectful manners he entreats
That she would eat—yet Jacob little eats;
When she forbears, his supplicating eye
Entreats the noble dame once more to try.
Their years the same; and he has never known
Another place; and this he deems his own,—
All appertains to him. Whate'er he sees
Is *ours!*—"our house, our land, our walks, our trees!"

But still he fears the time is just at hand
When he no more shall in that presence stand;
And he resolves, with mingled grief and pride,
To serve no being in the world beside.
"He has enough," he says, with many a sigh,
"For him to serve his God, and learn to die:
"He and his lady shall have heard their call,
"And the new folk, the strangers, may have all."

But, leaving these to their accustom'd way,
The Seat itself demands a short delay.
We all have interest there—the trees that grow
Near to that seat, to that their grandeur owe;
They take, but largely pay, and equal grace bestow:
They hide a part, but still the part they shade
Is more inviting to our fancy made;
And, if the eye be robb'd of half its sight,
Th' imagination feels the more delight.
These giant oaks by no man's order stand;
Heaven did the work; by no man was it plann'd.

Here I behold no puny works of art,
None give me reasons why these views impart
Such charm to fill the mind, such joy to swell the heart.
These very pinnacles, and turrets small,
And windows dim, have beauty in them all.
How stately stand yon pines upon the hill,
How soft the murmurs of that living rill!
And o'er the park's tall paling, scarcely higher,
Peeps the low Church and shows the modest spire.
Unnumber'd violets on those banks appear,
And all the first-born beauties of the year.
The grey-green blossoms of the willows bring
The large wild bees upon the labouring wing;
Then comes the Summer with augmented pride,
Whose pure small streams along the valleys glide:
Her richer Flora their brief charms display,
And, as the fruit advances, fall away.
Then shall th' autumnal yellow clothe the leaf,
What time the reaper binds the burden'd sheaf:
Then silent groves denote the dying year,
The morning frost, and noontide gossamer;
And all be silent in the scene around,
All save the distant sea's uncertain sound,
Or here and there the gun whose loud report
Proclaims to man that Death is but his sport.
And then the wintry winds begin to blow,
Then fall the flaky stars of gathering snow,
When on the thorn the ripening sloe, yet blue,
Takes the bright varnish of the morning dew;
The aged moss grows brittle on the pale,
The dry boughs splinter in the windy gale,
And every changing season of the year
Stamps on the scene its English character.

Farewell! a prouder Mansion I may see,
But much must meet in that which equals thee!

II.

I leave the town, and take a well-known way,
To that old mansion in the closing day,
When beams of golden light are shed around,
And sweet is every sight and every sound.
Pass but this hill, and I shall then behold
The Seat so honour'd, so admired of old,
And yet admired——

Alas! I see a change,
Of odious kind, and lamentably strange.
Who had done this? The good old Lady lies
Within her tomb; but who could this advise?
What barbarous hand could all this mischief do,
And spoil a noble house to make it new?
Who had done this? Some genuine Son of Trade
Has all this dreadful devastation made;
Some man with line and rule, and evil eye,
Who could no beauty in a tree descry,
Save in a clump, when station'd by his hand,
And standing where his genius bade them stand;
Some true admirer of the time's reform,
Who strips an ancient dwelling like a storm,
Strips it of all its dignity and grace,
To put his own dear fancies in their place.
He hates concealment: all that was enclosed
By venerable wood is now exposed,
And a few stripling elms and oaks appear,
Fenced round by boards to keep them from the deer.

I miss the grandeur of the rich old scene,
And see not what these clumps and patches mean!
This shrubby belt that runs the land around
Shuts freedom out! what being likes a bound?
The shrubs indeed, and ill-placed flowers, are gay,
And some would praise; I wish they were away,
That in the wild-wood maze I as of old might stray.
The things themselves are pleasant to behold,
But not like those which we beheld of old,—
That half-hid mansion, with its wide domain,
Unbound and unsubdued!—but sighs are vain;
It is the rage of Taste—the rule and compass reign.

As thus my spleen upon the view I fed,
A man approach'd me, by his grandchild led—
A blind old man, and she a fair young maid,
Listening in love to what her grandsire said.

And thus with gentle voice he spoke—
" Come lead me, lassie, to the shade,
" Where willows grow beside the brook;
" For well I know the sound it made,
" When, dashing o'er the stony rill,
" It murmur'd to St. Osyth's Mill."

The Lass replied—" The trees are fled,
" They 've cut the brook a straighter bed:
" No shades the present lords allow,
" The miller only murmurs now;
" The waters now his mill forsake,
" And form a pond they call a lake."

" Then, lassie, lead thy grandsire on,
" And to the holy water bring;
" A cup is fasten'd to the stone,
" And I would taste the healing spring,
" That soon its rocky cist forsakes,
" And green its mossy passage makes."

" The holy spring is turn'd aside,
" The rock is gone, the stream is dried;
" The plough has levell'd all around,
" And here is now no holy ground."

" Then, lass, thy grandsire's footsteps guide
" To Bulmer's Tree, the giant oak,
" Whose boughs the keeper's cottage hide,
" And part the church-way lane o'erlook;
" A boy, I climb'd the topmost bough,
" And I would feel its shadow now.

" Or, lassie, lead me to the west,
" Where grew the elm-trees thick and tall,
" Where rooks unnumber'd build their nest—
" Deliberate birds, and prudent all:
" Their notes, indeed, are harsh and rude,
" But they 're a social multitude."

" The rooks are shot, the trees are fell'd,
" And nest and nursery all expell'd;
" With better fate, the giant-tree,
" Old Bulmer's Oak, is gone to sea.
" The church-way walk is now no more,
" And men must other ways explore:
" Though this indeed promotion gains,
" For this the park's new wall contains;
" And here I fear we shall not meet
" A shade—although, perchance, a seat."

" O then, my lassie, lead the way
" To Comfort's Home, the ancient inn;
" That something holds, if we can pay—
" Old David is our living kin;
" A servant once, he still preserves
" His name, and in his office serves."

" Alas! that mine should be the fate
" Old David's sorrows to relate:
" But they were brief: not long before
" He died, his office was no more.
" The kennel stands upon the ground,
" With something of the former sound."

" O then," the grieving Man replied,
" No further, lassie, let me stray;
" Here 's nothing left of ancient pride,
" Of what was grand, of what was gay:
" But all is changed, is lost, is sold—
" All, all that 's left is chilling cold.
" I seek for comfort here in vain,
" Then lead me to my cot again."

TALE XI.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE MERCHANT.

I.

Lo! one appears, to whom if I should dare
To say *Farewell!* the lordly man would stare,—
Would stretch his goodly form some inches higher,
And then, without a single word, retire;
Or from his state might haply condescend
To doubt his memory—" Ha! your name, my friend!"

He is the master of these things we see,
Those vessels proudly riding by the quay;
With all those mountain heaps of coal that lie,
For half a county's wonder and supply.
Boats, cables, anchors, all to him pertain,—
A swimming fortune, all his father's gain.
He was a porter on the quay, and one
Proud of his fortune, prouder of his son,—
Who was ashamed of him, and much distress'd
To see his father was no better dress'd.
Yet for this parent did the son erect
A tomb—'t is whisper'd he must not expect
The like for him when he shall near it sleep,—
Where we behold the marble cherubs weep.

There are no merchants who with us reside
In half his state,—no wonder he has pride;
Then he parades around that vast estate,
As if he spurn'd the slaves that make him great;
Speaking in tone so high, as if the ware
Was nothing worth—at least not worth his care;
Yet should he not these bulky stores contemn,
For all his glory he derives from them;
And were it not for that neglected store,
This great rich man would be extremely poor.

Generous, men call him, for he deigns to give;
He condescends to say the poor must live:
Yet in his seamen not a sign appears
That they have much respect or many fears;
With inattention they their patron meet,
As if they thought his dignity a cheat;
Or of himself as, having much to do
With their affairs, he very little knew;
As if his ways to them so well were known,
That they might hear, and bow, and take their own.

He might contempt for men so humble feel,
But this experience taught him to conceal;
For sailors do not to a lord at land,
As to their captain, in submission stand;
Nor have mere pomp and pride of look or speech
Been able yet respect or awe to teach.

Guns, when with powder charged, will make a noise,
To frighten babes and be the sport of boys;
But when within men find there 's nothing more,
They shout contemptuous at the idle roar.
Thus will our lofty man to all appear,
With nothing charged that they respect or fear.

His Lady, too, to her large purse applies,
And all she fancies at the instant buys.
How bows the market, when, from stall to stall,
She walks attended! how respectful all!
To her free orders every maid attends,
And strangers wonder what the woman spends.

There is an auction, and the people, shy,
Are loath to bid, and yet desire to buy.
Jealous they gaze with mingled hope and fear,
Of *buying cheaply*, and *of paying dear*.
They see the hammer with determined air
Seized for despatch, and bid in pure despair!
They bid—the hand is quiet as before,—
Still stands old Puff till one advances more.—
Behold great madam, gliding through the crowd:
Hear her too bid—decisive tone and loud!
"Going! 't is gone!" the hammer-holder cries—
"Joy to you, Lady! you have gain'd a prize."

Thus comes and goes the wealth that, saved or spent,
Buys not a moment's credit or content.

Farewell! your fortune I forbear to guess;
For chance, as well as sense, may give success.

II.

P.—Say, what yon buildings, neat indeed, but low,
So much alike, in one commodious row?

F.—You see our Alms-house: ancient men, decay'd,
Are here sustain'd, who lost their way in trade;
Here they have all that sober men require—
So thought the Poet—"meat, and clothes, and fire;"
A little garden to each house pertains,
Convenient each, and kept with little pains.
Here for the sick are nurse and medicine found;
Here walks and shaded alleys for the sound;
Books of devotion on the shelves are placed,
And not forbidden are the books of taste.
The Church is near them—in a common seat
The pious men with grateful spirit meet:
Thus from the world, which they no more admire,
They all in silent gratitude retire.

P.—And is it so? Have all, with grateful mind,
The world relinquish'd, and its ways resign'd?
Look they not back with lingering love and slow,
And fain would once again the oft-tried follies know?

F.—Too surely some! We must not think that all
Call'd to be hermits would obey the call;
We must not think that all forget the state
In which they moved, and bless their humbler fate;
But all may here the waste of life retrieve,
And, ere they leave the world, its vices leave.

See yonder man, who walks apart, and seems
Wrapp'd in some fond and visionary schemes;
Who looks uneasy, as a man oppress'd
By that large copper badge upon his breast.
His painful shame, his self-tormenting pride,
Would all that 's visible in bounty hide;
And much his anxious breast is swell'd with woe,
That where he goes his badge must with him go.

P.—Who then is he? Do I behold aright?
My lofty Merchant in this humble plight!
Still has he pride?

F.—If common fame be just,
He yet has pride,—the pride that licks the dust;
Pride that can stoop, and feed upon the base
And wretched flattery of this humbling place—
Nay, feeds himself! His failing is avow'd,
He of the cause that made him poor is proud;
Proud of his greatness, of the sums he spent,
And honours shown him wheresoe'er he went.

Yes! there he walks, that lofty man is he,
Who was so rich; but great he could not be.
Now to the paupers who about him stand,
He tells of wonders by his bounty plann'd,—
Tells of his traffic, where his vessels sail'd,
And what a trade he drove—before he fail'd.
Then what a failure, not a paltry sum,
Like a mean trader, but for half a plum;
His Lady's wardrobe was apprised so high,
At his own sale, that nobody would buy!—
"But she is gone," he cries, "and never saw
"The spoil and havoc of our cruel law:
"My steeds, our chariot that so roll'd along,
"Admired of all! they sold them for a song.
"You all can witness what my purse could do,
"And now I wear a badge like one of you,
"Who in my service had been proud to live,—
"And this is all a thankless town will give.
"I, who have raised the credit of that town,
"And gave it, thankless as it is, renown—
"Who 've done what no man there had done before—
"Now hide my head within an Alms-house door—
"Deprived of all—my wife, my wealth, my vote,
"And in this blue defilement—*Curse the Coat!*"

TALE XII.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE BROTHER BURGESSES.

I.

Two busy Brothers in our place reside,
And wealthy each, his party's boast and pride;
Sons of one father, of two mothers born,
They hold each other in true party-scorn.

James is the one who for the people fights,
The sturdy champion of their dubious rights;
Merchant and seaman rough, but not the less
Keen in pursuit of his own happiness;
And what his happiness?—To see his store
Of wealth increase, till Mammon groans, "No more!"

James goes to church—because his father went,
But does *not* hide his leaning to dissent;
Reasons for this, whoe'er may frown, he 'll speak—
Yet the old pew receives him once a-week.

Charles is a churchman, and has all the zeal
That a strong member of his church can feel;
A loyal subject is the name he seeks;
He of "his King and Country" proudly speaks:
He says, his brother, and a rebel-crew
Minded like him, the nation would undo,
If they had power, or were esteem'd enough
Of those who had, to bring their plans to proof.

James answers sharply—"I will never place
"My hopes upon a Lordship or a Grace!
"To some great man you bow, to greater he,
"Who to the greatest bends his supple knee,
"That so the manna from the head may drop,
"And at the lowest of the kneelers stop.
"Lords call you loyal, and on them you call
"To spare you something from our plunder'd all:
"If tricks like these to slaves can treasure bring,
"Slaves well may shout them hoarse for 'Church and King!'"

"Brother!" says Charles,—"yet brother is a name
"I own with pity, and I speak with shame,—
"One of these days you 'll surely lead a mob,
"And then the hangman will conclude the job."

"And would you, Charles, in that unlucky case,
"Beg for his life whose death would bring disgrace
"On you and all the loyal of our race?
"Your worth would surely from the halter bring
"One neck, and I a patriot then might sing—
"A brother patriot I—God save our noble king!"

"James!" said the graver man, in manner grave—
"Your neck I could not, I your soul would save:
"Oh! ere that day—alas, too likely!—come,
"I would prepare your mind to meet your doom,
"That then the priest, who prays with that bad race
"Of men, may find you not devoid of grace."

These are the men who, from their seats above,
Hear frequent sermons on fraternal love;
Nay, each approves, and answers—"Very true!
"Brother would heed it, were he not a Jew."

II.

P.—Read I aright? beneath this stately stone
The Brothers rest in peace, their grave is one!
What friend, what fortune interfered, that they
Take their long sleep together, clay with clay?
How came it thus?—

F.—It was their own request,
By both repeated, that they thus might rest.

P.—'T is well! Did friends at length the pair unite?
Or was it done because the deed was right?
Did the cool spirit of enfeebling age
Chill the warm blood, and calm the party rage,
And kindly lead them, in their closing day,
To put their animosity away,
Incline their hearts to live in love and peace,
And bid the ferment in each bosom cease?

F.—Rich men have runners, who will to and fro
In search of food for their amusement go;
Who watch their spirits, and with tales of grief
Yield to their melancholy minds relief;
Who of their foes will each mishap relate,
And of their friends the fall or failings state.

One of this breed—the Jackal who supplied
Our Burgess Charles with food for spleen and pride—
Before he utter'd what his memory brought,
On its effect, in doubtful matters, thought,
Lest he, perchance, in his intent might trip,
Or a strange fact might indiscreetly slip;—
But he one morning had a tale to bring,
And felt full sure he need not weigh *the thing*;
That must be welcome! With a smiling face
He watch'd the accustom'd nod, and took his place.

"Well! you have news—I see it—Good, my friend!
"No preface, Peter. Speak, man,—I attend."

"Then, sir, I'm told—nay, 't is beyond dispute—
"Our Burgess James is routed horse and foot;
"He 'll not be seen; a clerk for him appears,
"And their precautions testify their fears;
"Before the week be ended you shall see
"That our famed patriot will a bankrupt be."

"Will he, by——! No, I will not be profane—
"But James a bankrupt! Boy, my hat and cane.
"No! he 'll refuse my offers—Let my think!
"So would I his: here, give me pen and ink.
"There! that will do.—What! let my father's son,
"My brother, want—and I—away! and run,

"Run as for life, and then return—but stay
"To take his message—now, away, away!"

The pride of James was shaken as he read—
The Brothers met—the angry spirit fled:
Few words were needed—in the look of each
There was a language words can never reach;
But when they took each other's hand, and press'd,
Subsiding tumult sank to endless rest;
Nor party wrath with quick affection strove,
Drown'd in the tears of reconciling love.

Affairs confused, and business at a stand,
Were soon set right by Charles's powerful hand;
The rudest mind in this rude place enjoy'd
The pleasing thought of enmity destroy'd,
And so destroy'd, that neither spite nor spleen,
Nor peevish look, from that bless'd hour were seen;
Yet each his party and his spirit kept,
Though all the harsh and angry passions slept.

P.—And they too sleep! and, at their joint request,
Within one tomb, beneath one stone, they rest!

TALE XIII.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE DEAN'S LADY.

I.

NEXT, to a Lady I must bid adieu
Whom some in mirth or malice call a "*Blue.*"
There needs no more—when that same word is said,
The men grow shy, respectful, and afraid;
Save the choice friends who in her colour dress,
And all her praise in words like hers express.

Why should proud man in man that knowledge prize
Which he affects in woman to despise?
Is he not envious when a lady gains,
In hours of leisure, and with little pains,
What he in many a year with painful toil obtains?
For surely knowledge should not odious grow,
Nor ladies be despised for what they know;
Truth, to no sex confined, her friends invites,
And woman, long restrain'd, demands her rights.
Nor should a light and odious name be thrown
On the fair dame who makes that knowledge known—
Who bravely dares the world's sarcastic sneer,
And what she is, is willing to appear.

"And what she is not!" peevish man replies,
His envy owning what his pride denies:
But let him, envious as he is, repair
To this sage Dame, and meet conviction there.

Miranda sees her morning levee fill'd
With men, in every art and science skill'd—
Men who have gain'd a name, whom she invites,
Because in men of genius she delights.
To these she puts her questions, that produce
Discussion vivid, and discourse abstruse:
She no opinion for its boldness spares,
But loves to show her audience what she dares;
The creeds of all men she takes leave to sift,
And, quite impartial, turns her own adrift.

Her noble mind, with independent force,
Her Rector questions on his late discourse;
Perplex'd and pain'd, he wishes to retire
From one whom critics, nay, whom crowds, admire—
From her whose faith on no man's dictate leans,
Who her large creed from many a teacher gleans;
Who for herself will judge, debate, decide,
And be her own "philosopher and guide."

Why call a lady *blue*? It is because
She reads, converses, studies for applause;
And therefore all that she desires to know
Is just as much as she can fairly show.
The real knowledge we in secret hide,
It is the counterfeit that makes our pride.
"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,"—
So sings the Poet, and so let him sing:
But if from little learning danger rose,
I know not who in safety could repose.
The evil rises from our own mistake,
When we our ignorance for knowledge take;
Or when the little that we have, through pride
And vain poor self-love view'd, is magnified.
Nor is your deepest Azure always free
From these same dangerous calls of vanity.

Yet of the sex are those who never show,
By way of exhibition, what they know.
Their books are read and praised, and so are they,
But all without design, without display.
Is there not One who reads the hearts of men,
And paints them strongly with unrivall'd pen?
All their fierce Passions in her scenes appear,
Terror she bids arise, bids fall the tear;
Looks in the close recesses of the mind,
And gives the finish'd portraits to mankind,
By skill conducted, and to Nature true,—
And yet no man on earth would call *Joanna* blue!

Not so Miranda! She is ever press'd
To give opinions, and she gives her best.
To these with gentle smile her guests incline,
Who come to hear, improve, applaud,—and dine.

Her hungry mind on every subject feeds;
She Adam Smith and Dugald Stewart reads;
Locke entertains her, and she wonders why
His famous Essay is consider'd dry.
For her amusement in her vacant hours
Are earths and rocks and animals and flowers:
She could the farmer at his work assist,
A systematic agriculturist.
Some men, indeed, would curb the female mind,
Nor let us see that they themselves are blind;
But—thank our stars!—the liberal times allow
That all may think, and men have rivals now.

Miranda deems all knowledge might be gain'd—
" But she is idle, nor has much attain'd;
" Men are in her deceived: she knows at most
" A few light matters, for she scorns to boast:
" Her mathematic studies she resign'd—
" They did not suit the genius of her mind.
" She thought indeed the higher parts sublime,
" But then they took a monstrous deal of time!"

Frequent and full the letters she delights
To read in part; she names not him who writes—
But here and there a precious sentence shows,
Telling what literary debts she owes.
Works, yet unprinted, for her judgment come;
" Alas!" she cries, " and I must seal their doom.
" Sworn to be just, the judgment gives me pain—
" Ah! why must truth be told, or man be vain?"

Much she has written, and still deigns to write,
But not an effort yet must see the light.
" Cruel!" her friends exclaim; " unkind, unjust!"
But, no! the envious mass she will not trust;
Content to hear that fame is due to her,
Which on her works the world might not confer—
Content with loud applauses while she lives;
Unfelt the pain the cruel critic gives.

II.

P.—Now where the Learned Lady? Doth she live,
Her dinners yet and sentiments to give—
The Dean's wise consort, with the many friends,
From whom she borrows, and to whom she lends
Her precious maxims?

F.—Yes, she lives to shed
Her light around her, but her Dean is dead.
Seen her I have, but seldom could I see:
Borrow she could not, could not lend to me;
Yet I attended, and beheld the tribe
Attending too, whom I will not describe—
Miranda Thomson! Yes, I sometimes found
A seat among a circle so profound;
When all the science of the age combined
Was in that room, and hers the master-mind.
Well I remember the admiring crowd,
Who spoke their wonder and applause aloud;
They strove who highest should her glory raise,
And cramm'd the hungry mind with honey'd praise—
While she, with grateful hand, a table spread,
The Dean assenting—but the Dean is dead;
And though her sentiments are still divine,
She asks no more her auditors to dine.

Once from her lips came wisdom; when she spoke,
Her friends in transport or amazement broke:
Now to her dictates there attend but few,
And they expect to meet attention too;
Respect she finds is purchased at some cost,
And deference is withheld, when dinner 's lost.

She, once the guide and glory of the place,
Exists between oblivion and disgrace;
Praise once afforded, now—they say not why,
They dare not say it—fickle men deny;
That buzz of fame a new Minerva cheers,
Which our deserted queen no longer hears.
Old, but not wise—forsaken, not resign'd,
She gives to honours past her feeble mind,
Back to her former state her fancy moves,
And lives on past applause, that still she loves;
Yet holds in scorn the fame no more in view,
And flies the glory that would not pursue
To yon small cot, a poorly jointured *Blue*.

TALE XIV.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE WIFE AND WIDOW.

I.

I LEAVE *Sophia;* it would please me well,
Before we part, on so much worth to dwell:
'T is said of one who lived in times of strife,
There was no boyhood in his busy life;
Born to do all that mortal being can,
The thinking child became at once the man:
So this fair girl in early youth was led,
By reasons strong, in early youth to wed.

In her new state her prudence was her guide,
And of experience well the place supplied;
With life's important business full in view,
She had no time for its amusements too;
She had no practised look man's heart t' allure,
No frown to kill him, and no smile to cure;
No art coquettish, nothing of the prude;
She was with strong yet simple sense endued,
Intent on duties, and resolved to shun
Nothing that ought to be, and could be, done.

A Captain's wife, with him she *long* sustain'd
The toil of war, and in a camp remain'd;
Her husband wounded, with a child in arms,
She nursed them both, unheeded all alarms;
All useless terror in her soul suppress'd—
None could discern in hers a troubled breast.

Her wounded soldier is a prisoner made;
She hears, prepares, and is at once convey'd
Through hostile ranks:—with air sedate she goes,
And makes admiring friends of wondering foes.
Her dying husband to her care confides
Affairs perplex'd; she reasons, she decides;
If intricate her way, her walk discretion guides.

Home to her country she returns alone,
Her health decay'd, her child, her husband, gone;
There she in peace reposes, there resumes
Her female duties, and in rest re-blooms;
She is not one at common ills to droop,
Nor to vain murmuring will her spirit stoop.

I leave her thus: her fortieth year is nigh,
She will not for another captain sigh;

Will not a young and gay lieutenant take,
Because 't is pretty to reform a rake:
Yet she again may plight her widow'd hand,
Should love invite, or charity demand;
And make her days, although for duty's sake,
As sad as folly and mischance can make.

II.

P.—Lives yet the Widow, whose firm spirit bore
Ills unrepining?—

F.—Here she lives no more,
But where—I speak with some good people's leave—
Where all good works their due reward receive;
Though what reward to our best works is due
I leave to them, and will my tale pursue.

Again she married, to her husband's friend,
Whose wife was hers, whom going to attend,
As on her deathbed she, yet young, was laid,
The anxious parent took her hand and said,
"Prove *now* your love; let these poor infants be
"As thine, and find a mother's love in thee!"

"And must I woo their father?"—"Nay, indeed;
"He no encouragement but hope will need;
"In hope too let me die, and think my wish decreed."

The wife expires; the widow'd pair unite;
Their love was sober, and their prospect bright.
She train'd the children with a studious love,
That knew full well t' encourage and reprove;
Nicely she dealt her praise and her disgrace,
Not harsh, and not indulgent out of place,
Not to the forward partial—to the slow
All patient, waiting for the time to sow
The seeds that, suited to the soil, would grow.

Nor watch'd she less the Husband's weaker soul,
But learn'd to lead him who abhorr'd control,
Who thought a nursery, next a kitchen, best
To women suited, and she acquiesced;
She only begg'd to rule in small affairs,
And ease her wedded lord of common cares,
Till he at length thought every care was small,
Beneath his notice, and she had them all.
He on his throne the lawful monarch sate,
And she was by—the minister of state:
He gave assent, and he required no more,
But sign'd the act that she decreed before.

Again, her fates in other work decree
A mind so active should experienced be.

One of the name, who roved the world around,
At length had something of its treasures found,
And childless died, amid his goods and gain,
In far Barbadoes on the western main.
His kinsman heard, and wish'd the wealth to share,
But had no mind to be transported there:—
"His Wife could sail—her courage who could doubt?—
"And she was not tormented with the gout."

She liked it not; but for his children's sake,
And for their father's, would the duty take.
Storms she encounter'd ere she reach'd the shore,
And other storms when these were heard no more,—
The rage of lawyers forced to drop their prey,—
And once again to England made her way.

She found her Husband with his gout removed,
And a young nurse, most skilful and approved;
Whom—for he yet was weak—he urged to stay,
And nurse him while his consort was away:—
"She was so handy, so discreet, so nice,
"As kind as comfort, though as cold as ice!
"Else," he assured his lady, "in no case,
"So young a creature should have fill'd the place."

It has been held—indeed the point is clear,
"None are so deaf as those who will not hear:"
And, by the same good logic, we shall find,
"As those who will not see, are none so blind."
The thankful Wife repaid th' attention shown,
But now would make the duty all her own.

Again the gout return'd; but, seizing now
A vital part, would no relief allow.

The Husband died, but left a will that proved
He much respected whom he coolly loved.
All power was hers; nor yet was such her age,
But rivals strove her favour to engage:
They talk'd of love with so much warmth and zeal,
That they believed the woman's heart must feel;
Adding such praises of her worth beside,
As vanquish prudence oft by help of pride.

In vain! her heart was by discretion led—
She to the children of her friend was wed;
These she establish'd in the world, and died,
In ease and hope, serene and satisfied.

And loves not man *that* woman who *can* charm
Life's grievous ills, and grief itself disarm?—
Who in his fears and troubles brings him aid,
And seldom is, and never seems, afraid?!

No! ask of man the fair one whom he loves,
You 'll find her one of the desponding doves,
Who tender troubles as her portion brings,
And with them fondly to a husband clings—
Who never moves abroad, nor sits at home,
Without distress, past, present, or to come—
Who never walks the unfrequented street
Without a dread that death and she shall meet:
At land, on water, she must guarded be,
Who sees the danger none besides her see,
And is determined by her cries to call
All men around her—she will have them all.

Man loves to think the tender being lives
But by the power that his protection gives:
He loves the feeble step, the plaintive tone,
And flies to help who cannot stand alone:
He thinks of propping elms, and clasping vines,
And in her weakness thinks her virtue shines;

On him not one of her desires is lost,
And he admires her for this care and cost.

But when afflictions come, when beauty dies,
Or sorrows vex the heart, or danger tries—
When time of trouble brings the daily care,
And gives of pain as much as he can bear—
'T is then he wants, if not the helping hand,
At least a soothing temper, meek and bland—
He wants the heart that shares in his distress,
At least the kindness that would make it less;
And when instead he hears th' eternal grief
For some light want, and not for his relief—
And when he hears the tender trembler sigh
For some indulgence he can not supply—
When, in the midst of many a care, his "dear,"
Would like a duchess at a ball appear—
And, while he feels a weight that bears him down,
Would see the prettiest sight in all the town,—
Love then departs, and if some Pity lives,
That Pity half despises, half forgives;
'T is join'd with grief, is not from shame exempt,
And has a plenteous mixture of contempt.

TALE XV.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

BELINDA WATERS.

I.

Of all the beauties in our favour'd place,
Belinda Waters was the pride and grace.
Say ye who sagely can our fortunes read,
Shall this fair damsel in the world succeed?

A rosy beauty she, and fresh and fair,
Who never felt a caution or a care;
Gentle by nature, ever fond of ease,
And more consenting than inclined to please.
A tame good nature in her spirit lives—
She hates refusal for the pain it gives:
From opposition arguments arise,
And, to prevent the trouble, she complies.
She, if in Scotland, would be *fash'd* all day,
If call'd to any work or any play;
She lets no busy, idle wish intrude,
But is by nature negatively good.

In marriage hers will be a dubious fate!
She is not fitted for a high estate;—
There wants the grace, the polish, and the pride;
Less is she fitted for an humble bride:
Whom fair Belinda weds—let chance decide!

She sees her father oft engross'd by cares,
And therefore hates to hear of men's affairs:
An active mother in the household reigns,
And spares Belinda all domestic pains.
Of food she knows but this, that we are fed:—
Though, duly taught, she prays for daily bread,
Yet whence it comes, of hers is no concern—
It comes! and more she never wants to learn.

She on the table sees the common fare,
But how provided is beneath her care.
Lovely and useless, she has no concern
About the things that aunts and mothers learn;
But thinks, when married—if she *thinks at all*—
That what she needs will answer to her call.

To write is business, and, though taught to write,
She keeps the pen and paper out of sight:
What once was painful she can not allow
To be enjoyment or amusement now.
She wonders why the ladies are so fond
Of such long letters when they correspond.
Crowded and cross'd by ink of different stain,
She thinks to read them would confuse her brain;
Nor much mistakes; but still has no pretence
To praise for this, her critic's indolence.

Behold her now! she on her sofa looks
O'er half a shelf of circulating books.
This she admired, but she forgets the name,
And reads again another, or the same.
She likes to read of strange and bold escapes,
Of plans and plottings, murders and mishaps,
Love in all hearts, and lovers in all shapes.
She sighs for pity, and her sorrows flow
From the dark eyelash on the page below;
And is so glad when, all the misery past,
The dear adventurous lovers meet at last—
Meet and are happy; and she thinks it hard,
When thus an author might a pair reward—
When they, the troubles all dispersed, might wed—
He makes them part, and die of grief, instead!

Yet tales of terror are her dear delight,
All in the wintry storm to read at night;
And to her maid she turns in all her doubt,—
"This shall I like? and what is that about?"

She had "Clarissa" for her heart's dear friend—
Was pleased each well-tried virtue to commend,
And praised the scenes that one might fairly doubt
If one so young could know so much about:
Pious and pure, th' heroic beauty strove
Against the lover and against the love;
But strange that maid so young should know the strife,
In all its views, was painted to the life!
Belinda knew not—nor a tale would read,
That could so slowly on its way proceed;
And ere Clarissa reach'd the wicked town,
The weary damsel threw the volume down.
"Give me," she said, "for I would laugh or cry,
"'Scenes from the Life,' and 'Sensibility;'
"'Winters at Bath,'—I would that I had one!—
"'The Constant Lover,' 'The Discarded Son,'
"'The Rose of Raby,' 'Delmore,' or 'The Nun.'
"These promise something, and may please perhaps,
"Like 'Ethelinda,' and the dear 'Relapse.'"
To these her heart the gentle maid resign'd,
And such the food that fed the gentle mind.

II.

P.—Knew you the fair Belinda, once the boast
Of a vain mother, and a favourite toast
Of clerks and young lieutenants, a gay set
Of light admirers?—Is she married yet?

F.—Yes! she is married; though she waited long,
Not from a prudent fear of choosing wrong,
But want of choice.—She took a surgeon's mate,
With his half-pay, that was his whole estate.

Fled is the charming bloom that nature spread
Upon her cheek, the pure, the rosy red—
This, and the look serene, the calm, kind look, are fled.
Sorrow and sadness now the place possess,
And the pale cast of anxious fretfulness.

She *wonders* much—as, why they live so ill,—
Why the rude butcher brings his weekly bill,—
She wonders why that baker will not trust,—
And says, most truly says,—"Indeed, he must."
She wonders where her former friends are gone,—
And thus, from day to day, she wonders on.

Howe'er she can—she dresses gaily yet,
And then she wonders how they came in debt.
Her husband loves her, and in accent mild
Answers, and treats her like a fretted child;
But when he, ruffled, makes severe replies,
And seems unhappy, then she pouts and cries
"She wonders when she 'll die!"—She faints, but never dies.

"How well my father lived!" she says.—"How well,
"My dear, your father's creditors could tell!"
And then she weeps, till comfort is applied,
That soothes her spleen or gratifies her pride;
Her dress and novels, visits and success
In a chance-game, are soft'ners of distress.

So life goes on!—But who that loved his life
Would take a fair Belinda for his wife?
Who thinks that all are for their stations born,
Some to indulge themselves, and to adorn;
And some a useful people, to prepare,
Not being rich, good things for those who are,
And who are born, it cannot be denied,
To have their wants and their demands supplied.

She knows that money is a needful thing,
That fathers first, and then that husbands bring;
Or if those persons should the aid deny,
Daughters and wives have but to faint and die,
Till flesh and blood cannot endure the pain,
And then the lady lives and laughs again.

To wed an ague, and to feel, for life,
Hot fits and cold succeeding in a wife—
To take the pestilence with poison'd breath,
And wed some potent minister of death,
Is cruel fate—yet death is then relief;
But thus to wed is ever-during grief.

Oft have I heard, How bless'd the youth who weds
Belinda Waters!—rather he who dreads
That fate—a truth her husband well approves,
Who blames and fondles, humours, chides, and loves.

TALE XVI.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE DEALER AND CLERK.

I.

BAD men are seldom cheerful; but we see
That, when successful, they can merry be.
One whom I leave, his darling money lends,
On terms well known, to his unhappy friends;
He farms and trades, and in his method treats
His guests, whom first he comforts, then he cheats.
He knows their private griefs, their inward groans,
And then applies his leeches and his loans
To failing, falling families—and gets,
I know not how, with large increase, their debts.

He early married, and the woman made
A losing bargain; she with scorn was paid
For no small fortune. On this slave he vents
His peevish slights, his moody discontents.
Her he neglects, indulging in her stead
One whom he bribed to leave a husband's bed—
A young fair mother too, the pride and joy
Of him whom her desertion will destroy.

The poor man walks by the adulterer's door,
To see the wife whom he must meet no more:
She will not look upon the face of one
Whom she has blighted, ruin'd, and undone.
He feels the shame; his heart with grief is rent;
Hers is the guilt, and his the punishment.

The cruel spoiler to his need would lend
Unsought relief—his need will soon have end:
Let a few wint'ry months in sorrow pass,
And on his corse shall grow the vernal grass.
Neighbours, indignant, of his griefs partake,
And hate the villain for the victim's sake;
Wond'ring what bolt within the stores of heaven
Shall on that bold, offending wretch be driven.

Alas! my grieving friends, we cannot know
Why Heaven inflicts, and why suspends, the blow.
Meanwhile the godless man, who thus destroys
Another's peace, in peace his wealth enjoys,
And, every law evaded or defied,
Is with long life and prosperous fortune tried:
"How long?" the Prophet cried, and we, "How long?"
But think how quick that Eye, that Arm how strong,
And bear what seems not right, and trust it is not wrong.

Does Heaven forbear?—then sinners mercy find:
Do sinners fall?—'t is mercy to mankind.
Adieu! can one so miserable be—
Rich, wretched man!—to barter fates with thee?

II.

Yet, ere I go, some notice must be paid
To *John*, his Clerk, a man full sore afraid
Of his own frailty—many a troubled day
Has he walk'd doubtful in some close by-way,
Beseeching Conscience on her watch to keep,
Afraid that she one day should fall asleep.

A quiet man was John: his mind was slow;
Little he knew, and little sought to know.
He gave respect to worth, to riches more,
And had instinctive dread of being poor.
Humble and careful, diligent and neat,
He in the Dealer's office found a seat:
Happy in all things, till a fear began
To break his rest—He served a wicked man,
Who spurn'd the way direct of honest trade,
But praised the laws his cunning could evade.

This crafty Dealer of religion spoke,
As if design'd to be the wise man's cloak,
And the weak man's encumbrance, whom it awes,
And keeps in dread of conscience and the laws:
Yet, for himself, he loved not to appear
In her grave dress; 't was troublesome to wear.

This Dealer play'd at games of skill, and won
Sums that surprised the simple mind of John:
Nor trusted skill alone; for well he knew
What a sharp eye and dext'rous hand could do;
When, if suspected, he had always by
The daring oath to back the cunning lie.

John was distress'd, and said with aching heart,
"I from the vile, usurious man must part;
"For if I go not—yet I mean to go—
"This friend to me will to my soul be foe.
"I serve my master—there is nought to blame;
"But whom he serves *I* tremble but to name."

From such reflections sprung the painful fear,—
"The Foe of Souls is too familiar here:
"My master stands between: so far, so good;
"But 't is at best a dangerous neighbourhood."

Then livelier thoughts began this fear to chase,—
"It is a gainful, a convenient place:
"If I should quit, another takes the pen,
"And what a chance for my preferment then?
"Religion nothing by my going gains;
"If I depart, my master still remains.
"True, I record the deeds that I abhor,
"But these that master has to answer for:
"Then say I leave the office! his success,
"And his injustice, will not be the less;
"Nay, would be greater—I am right to stay;
"It checks him, doubtless, in his fearful way.
"Fain would I stay, and yet be not beguiled;
"But pitch is near, and man is soon defiled."

III.

P.—Such were the Man and Master,—and I now
Would know if they together live, and how.

To such inquiries, thus my friend replied:—
F.—The Wife was slain—or, say at least, she died.
But there are murders that the human eye
Cannot detect—which human laws defy:
There are the wrongs insulted fondness feels,
In many a secret wound that never heals.
The Savage murders with a single blow;
Murders like this are secret and are slow.

Yet, when his victim lay upon her bier,
There were who witness'd that he dropp'd a tear;
Nay, more, he praised the woman he had lost,
And undisputed paid the funeral cost.

The Favourite now, her lord and master freed,
Prepared to wed, and be a wife indeed.
The day, 't was said, was fix'd, the robes were bought,
A feast was order'd; but a cold was caught,
And pain ensued, with fever—grievous pain,
With the mind's anguish that disturb'd the brain,—
Till nature ceased to struggle, and the mind
Saw clearly death before and sin behind.
Priests and physicians gave what they could give:
She turn'd away, and, shuddering, ceased to live.

The Dealer now appear'd a while as one
Lost; with but little of his race to run,
And that in sorrow: men with one consent,
And one kind hope, said, "Bonner will repent."
Alas! we saw not what his fate would be,
But this we fear'd—no penitence had he;
Nor time for penitence, nor any time,
So quick the summons, to look back on crime.

When he the partner of his sin entomb'd,
He paused a while, and then the way resumed,
E'en as before: yet was he not the same;
The tempter once, he now the dupe became.
John long had left him, nor did one remain
Who would his harlot in her course refrain;
Obsequious, humble, studious of his ease,
The present Phœbe only sought to please.
"With one so artless, what," said he, "to fear?
"Or what to doubt in one who holds me dear?
"Friends she may have, but me she will not wrong;
"If weak her judgment, yet her love is strong:
"And I am lucky now in age to find
"A friend so trusty, and a nurse so kind."

Yet neither party was in peace: the man
Had restless nights, and in the morn began
To cough and tremble; he was hot and cold—
He had a nervous fever, he was told.
His dreams—'twas strange, for none reflected less
On his past life—were frightful to excess;
His favourite dinners were no more enjoy'd,
And, in a word, his spirits were destroy'd.

And what of Phœbe? She her measures plann'd;
All but his money was at her command:
All would be hers when Heav'n her friend should call;
But Heav'n was slow, and much she long'd for all:—
"Mine when he dies, mean wretch! and why not mine,
"When it would prove him generous to resign
"What he enjoys not?"—Phœbe at command
Gave him his brandy with a liberal hand.
A way more quick and safe she did not know,
And brandy, though it might be sure, was slow.
But more she dared not; for she felt a dread
Of being tried, and only wish'd him dead.
Such was her restless strife of hope and fear—
He might cough on for many a weary year;
Nay, his poor mind was changing, and, when ill,
Some foe to her may wicked thoughts instil!
Oh! 'tis a trial sore to watch a Miser's will.
Thus, though the pair appear'd in peace to live,
They felt that vice has not that peace to give.

There watch'd a cur before the Miser's gate—
A very cur, whom all men seem'd to hate;
Gaunt, savage, shaggy, with an eye that shone
Like a live coal, and he possess'd but one;
His bark was wild and eager, and became
That meagre body and that eye of flame;
His master prized him much, and *Fang* his name.
His master fed him largely; but not that,
Nor aught of kindness, made the snarler fat.
Flesh he devour'd, but not a bit would stay;
He bark'd, and snarl'd, and growl'd it all away.
His ribs were seen extended like a rack,
And coarse red hair hung roughly o'er his back.
Lamed in one leg, and bruised in wars of yore,
Now his sore body made his temper sore.
Such was the friend of him who could not find
Nor make him one 'mong creatures of his kind.
Brave deeds of Fang his master often told,
The son of Fury, famed in deeds of old,
From Snatch and Rabid sprung; and noted they
In earlier times—each dog will have his day.

The notes of Fang were to his master known,
And dear—they bore some likeness to his own;
For both convey'd to the experienced ear,
"I snarl and bite because I hate and fear."
None pass'd ungreeted by the master's door,—
Fang rail'd at all, but chiefly at the poor;
And when the nights were stormy, cold, and dark,
The act of Fang was a perpetual bark;
But though the master loved the growl of Fang,
There were who vow'd the ugly cur to hang;
Whose angry master, watchful for his friend,
As strongly vow'd his servant to defend.

In one dark night, and such as Fang before
Was ever known its tempests to outroar,
To his protector's wonder now express'd
No angry notes—his anger was at rest.
The wond'ring master sought the silent yard,
Left Phœbe sleeping and his door unbarr'd;
Nor more return'd to that forsaken bed—
But lo! the morning came and he was dead.

Fang and his master side by side were laid
In grim repose—their debt of nature paid!
The master's hand upon the cur's cold chest
Was now reclined, and had before been press'd,
As if he search'd how deep and wide the wound
That laid such spirit in a sleep so sound;
And when he found it was the sleep of death,
A sympathising sorrow stopp'd his breath.
Close to his trusty servant he was found,
As cold his body, and his sleep as sound.

We know no more; but who on horrors dwell
Of that same night have dreadful things to tell:
Of outward force, they say, was not a sign—
The hand that struck him was the Hand Divine;
And then the Fiend, in that same stormy night,
Was heard—as many thought—to claim his right:
While grinning imps the body danced about,
And then they vanish'd with triumphant shout.

So think the crowd, and well it seems in them,
That e'en their dreams and fancies vice condemn;
That not alone for virtue Reason pleads,
But Nature shudders at unholy deeds;
While our strong fancy lists in her defence,
And takes the side of Truth and Innocence.

IV.

P.—But, what the fortune of the Man, whose fear
Inform'd his Conscience that the foe was near;
But yet whose interest to his desk confined
That sober Clerk of indecisive mind?

F.—John served his master, with himself at strife,
For he with Conscience lived like man and wife,
Now jarring, now at peace,—the life they led
Was all contention, both at board and bed:
His meals were troubled by his scruples all,
And in his dreams he was about to fall
Into some strong temptation—for it seems
He never could resist it in his dreams.

At length his Master, dealer, smuggler, cheat,
As John would call him in his temper's heat,
Proposed a something—what, is dubious still—
That John resisted with a stout good-will.
Scruples like his were treated with disdain,
Whose waking conscience spurn'd the offer'd gain.
"Quit then my office, scoundrel! and be gone."
"I dare not do it," said the affrighten'd John.
"What fear'st thou, driveller! can thy fancy tell?"
"I doubt," said John—"I'm sure there is a hell."
"No question, wretch! thy foot is on the door;
"To be in hell, thou fool! is to be poor.
"Wilt thou consent?"—But John, with many a sigh,
Refused, then sank beneath his stronger eye,
Who with a curse dismiss'd the fool that dared
Not join a venture which he might have shared.

The worthy Clerk then served a man in trade,
And was his friend and his companion made—
A sickly man, who sundry wares retail'd,
Till, while his trade increased, his spirit fail'd.
John was to him a treasure, whom he proved,
And, finding faithful, as a brother loved.

To John his views and business he consign'd,
And forward look'd with a contented mind;
As sickness bore him onward to the grave,
A charge of all things to his friend he gave.

But neighbours talk'd—'t was idle—of the day
When Richard Shale should walk the dark high-way;
And whisper'd—tattlers!—that the wife received
Such hints with anger, but she nothing grieved.

These whispers reach'd the man, who weak, and ill
In mind and body, had to make his will;
And though he died in peace, and all resign'd,
'T was plain he harbour'd fancies in his mind.
With jealous foresight, all that he had gain'd
His widow's was, while widow she remain'd;
But if another should the dame persuade
To wed again, farewell the gains of trade:
For if the widow'd dove could not refrain,
She must return to poverty again.

The man was buried, and the will was read,
And censure spared them not, alive or dead!
At first the Widow and the Clerk, her friend,
Spent their free days as prudence bade them spend.
At the same table they would dine, 't is true,
And they would worship in the self-same pew:
Each had the common interest so at heart,
It would have grieved them terribly to part;
And as they both were serious and sedate,
'T was long before the world began to prate:
But when it prated,—though without a cause,—
It put the pair in mind of breaking laws,
Led them to reason what it was that gave
A husband power when quiet in his grave.
The marriage contract they had now by heart—
"Till death!"—you see, no longer—"do us part."
"Well! death has loosed us from the tie, but still
"The loosen'd husband makes a binding will:
"Unjust and cruel are the acts of men."
Thus they—and then they sigh'd—and then—and then,
"'T was snaring souls," they said; and how he dared
They did not know—they wonder'd—and were snared.

"It is a marriage, surely! Conscience might
"Allow an act so very nearly right:
"Was it not witness to our solemn vow,
"As man and wife? it must the act allow."
But Conscience, stubborn to the last, replied,
"It cannot be! I am not satisfied;
"'T is not a marriage: either dare be poor,
"Or dare be virtuous—part, and sin no more."

Alas! they many a fond evasion made;
They could relinquish neither love nor trade.
They went to church, but, thinking, fail'd to pray;
They felt not ease or comfort at a play:
If times were good,—"We merit not such times;"
If ill—"Is this the produce of our crimes?"
When sick—"'T is thus forbidden pleasures cease."
When well—they both demand, "Had Zimri peace?
"For though our worthy master was not slain,
"His injured ghost has reason to complain."

Ah, John! bethink thee of thy generous joy,
When Conscience drove thee from thy late employ;
When thou wert poor, and knew not where to run,
But then could say, "The will of God be done!"
When thou that will, and not thine own, obey'd,—
Of Him alone, and not of man afraid:
Thou then hadst pity on that wretch, and, free
Thyself, couldst pray for him who injured thee:
Then how alert they step, thyself how light
All the day long! thy sleep how sound at night!

But now, though plenty on thy board be found,
And thou hast credit with thy neighbours round,
Yet there is something in thy looks that tells
An odious secret in thy bosom dwells:
Thy form is not erect, thy neighbours trace
A coward spirit in thy shifting pace.
Thou goest to meeting, not from any call,
But just to hear that we are sinners all,
And equal sinners, or the difference made
'Twixt man and man has but the slightest shade;
That reformation asks a world of pains,
And, after all, must leave a thousand stains;
And, worst of all, we must the work begin
By first attacking the prevailing sin!

These thoughts the feeble mind of John assail,
And o'er his reason and his fears prevail:
They fill his mind with hopes of gifts and grace,
Faith, feelings—something that supplies the place
Of true conversion—this will he embrace;
For John perceives that he was scarcely tried
By the first conquest, that increased his pride,
When he refused his master's crime to aid,
And by his self-applause was amply paid;
But now he feels the difference—feels it hard
Against his will and favourite wish to guard:
He mourns his weakness, hopes he shall prevail
Against his frailty, and yet still is frail.

Such is his life! and such the life must be
Of all who will be bound, yet would be free;
Who would unite what God to part decrees—
The offended conscience and the mind at ease;
Who think, but vainly think, to sin and pray,
And God and Mammon in their turn obey.
Such is his life!—and so I would not live
For all that wealthy widows have to give.

TALE XVII.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

DANVERS AND RAYNER.

I.

THE purest Friendship, like the finest ware,
Deserves our praises, but demands our care;
For admiration we the things produce,
But they are not design'd for common use;
Flaws the most trifling from their virtue take,
And lamentation for their loss we make:
While common Friendships, like the wares of clay,
Are a cheap kind, but useful every day:
Though crack'd and damaged, still we make them do,
And when they 're broken, they 're forgotten too.

There is within the world in which we dwell
A Friendship answering to that world full well,—
An *interchange of looks* and actions kind,
And, in some sense, an intercourse of mind,—
A *useful* commerce, a convenient trade,
By which both parties are the happier made;
And, when the thing is rightly understood,
And justly valued, it is wise and good.

I speak not here of Friendships that excite
In boys at school such wonder and delight,—
Of high heroic Friends, in serious strife,
Contending which should yield a forfeit life.
Such wondrous love, in their maturer days,
Men, if they credit, are content to praise.

I speak not here of Friendships true and just,
When friend can friend with life and honour trust;
Where mind to mind has long familiar grown,
And every failing, every virtue known:
Of these I speak not: things so rich and rare,
That we degrade with jewels to compare,
Or bullion pure and massy,—I intend
To treat of one whose Neighbour call'd him Friend,
Or call'd him Neighbour; and with reason good—
The friendship rising from the neighbourhood:
A sober kind, in common service known;
Not such as is in death and peril shown:
Such as will give or ask a helping hand,
But no important sacrifice demand:
In fact, a friendship that will long abide,
If seldom rashly, never strongly, tried.
Yes! these are sober friendships, made for use,
And much convenience they in life produce;
Light a good coat, that keeps us from the cold,
The cloth of frieze is not a cloth of gold;
But neither is it piebald, pieced, and poor;
'T is a good useful coat, and nothing more.

Such is the Friendship of the world approved,
And here the Friends so loving and so loved:—
Danvers and *Rayner*, equals, who had made
Each decent fortune, both were yet in trade;
While sons and daughters, with a youthful zeal,
Seem'd the hereditary love to feel;
And e'en their wives, though either might pretend
To claim some notice, call'd each other friend.

While yet their offspring boys and girls appear'd,
The fathers ask'd, "What evil could be fear'd?"
Nor is it easy to assign the year
When cautious parents should begin to fear.
The boys must leave their schools, and, by and by,
The girls are sure to grow reserved and shy;
And then, suppose a real love should rise,
It but unites the equal families.

Love does not always from such freedom spring;
Distrust, perhaps, would sooner cause the thing.
"We will not check it, neither will we force"—
Thus said the fathers—"Let it take its course."

It took its course:—Young Richard Danvers' mind
In Phœbe Rayner found what lovers find—
Sense, beauty, sweetness; all that mortal eyes
Can see, or heart conceive, or thought devise.
And Phœbe's eye, and thought, and heart could trace
In Richard Danvers every manly grace—
All that e'er maiden wish'd, or matron prized—
So well these good young people sympathised.

All their relations, neighbours, and allies,
All their dependants, visitors, and spies,
Such as a wealthy family caress,
Said here was love, and drank to love's success.

'T is thus I leave the parties, young and old,
Lovers and Friends. Will Love and Friendship hold?
Will Prudence with the children's wish comply,
And Friendship strengthen with that new ally?

II.

P.—I see no more within our borough's bound
The name of Danvers! Is it to be found?
Were the young pair in Hymen's fetters tied,
Or did succeeding years the Friends divide?

F.—Nay! take the story as by time brought forth,
And of such Love and Friendship judge the worth.
While the lad's love—his parents call'd it so—
Was going on, as well as love could go,
A wealthy Danvers, in a distant place,
Left a large fortune to this favour'd race.
To that same place the father quickly went,
And Richard only murmur'd weak dissent.

Of Richard's heart the parent truly guess'd:—
"Well, my good lad! then do what suits thee best;
"No doubt thy brothers will do all they can
"T' obey the orders of the good old man:
"Well, I would not thy free-born spirit bind;
"Take, Dick, the way to which thou 'rt most inclined."

No answer gave the youth; nor did he swear
The old man's riches were beneath his care;
Nor that he would with his dear Phœbe stay,
And let his heartless father move away.
No! kind and constant, tender, faithful, fond,—
Thus far he 'd go—but not one step beyond!
Not disobedient to a parent's will—
A lover constant—but dependent still.

Letters, at first, between the constant swain
And the kind damsel, banish'd all their pain:
Both full and quick they were; for lovers write
With vast despatch, and read with vast delight:
So quick they were,—for Love is never slow,—
So full, they ever seem'd to overflow.
Their hearts are ever fill'd with grief or joy,
And these to paint is every hour's employ:
Joy they would not retain; and for their grief,
To read such letters is a sure relief.

But, in due time, both joy and grief suppress'd,
They found their comfort in a little rest.
Mails went and came without the accustom'd freight,
For Love grew patient, and content to wait—
Yet was not dead, nor yet afraid to die;
For though he wrote not, Richard wonder'd why.
He could not justly tell how letters pass'd,
But, as to him appear'd, he wrote the last:
In this he meant not to accuse the maid—
Love, in some cases, ceases to upbraid.

Yet not indifferent was our Lover grown,
Although the ardour of the flame was flown;
He still of Phœbe thought, her lip, her smile—
But grew contented with his fate the while.
Thus, not inconstant were the youthful pair—
The Lad remember'd still the Lass was fair;
And Phœbe still, with half-affected sigh,
Thought it a pity that such love should die;
And had they then, with this persuasion met,
Love had rekindled, and been glowing yet.

But times were changed: no mention now was made
By the old Squire, or by the young, of trade.
The worthy Lady, and her children all,
Had due respect—The People at the Hall.
His Worship now read Burn, and talk'd with skill
About the poor-house, and the turnpike-bill;
Lord of a manor, he had serious claims,
And knew the poaching rascals by their names;
And if the father thus improved his mind,
Be sure the children were not far behind;
To rank and riches what respect was due,
To them and theirs what deference, well they knew;
And, from the greatest to the least, could show
What to the favouring few the favour'd many owe.

The mind of man must have whereon to work,
Or it will rust—we see it in the Turk;
And Justice Danvers, though he read the news,
And all of law that magistrates peruse,—
Bills about roads and charities,—yet still
Wanted employ his vacant mind to fill;
These were not like the shipping, once his pride,
Now, with his blue surtout, laid all aside.

No doubt, his spirits in their ebb to raise,
He found some help in men's respect and praise—
Praise of his house, his land, his lawn, his trees—
He cared not what—to praise him was to please:
Yet, though his rural neighbours call'd to dine,
And some might kindly praise his food and wine,
This was not certain, and another day
He must the visit and the praise repay.

By better motives urged—we will suppose—
He thus began his purpose to disclose
To his good lady:—"We have lived a year,
"And never ask'd our friends the Rayners here:
"Do let us ask them—as for Richard's flame,
"It went, we see, as idly as it came:
"Invite them kindly—here 's a power of room,
"And the poor people will be glad to come.
"Outside and in, the coach will hold them all,
"And set them down beside the garden-wall."

The Lady wrote, for that was all he meant,
Kind soul! by asking for his wife's assent:
And every Rayner was besought to come
To dine in Hulver Hall's grand dining-room.

About this time old Rayner, who had lost
His friend's advice, was by misfortune cross'd:
Some debtors fail'd when large amounts were due,
So large, that he was nearly failing too;
But he, grown wary, that he might not fail,
Brought-to in adverse gales, and shorten'd sail:
This done, he rested, and could now attend
The invitation of his distant Friend.

"Well! he would go: but not, indeed, t' admire
"The state and grandeur of the new-made Squire;
"Danvers, belike, now wealthy, might impart
"Some of his gold; for Danvers had a heart,
"And may have heard, though guarded so around,
"That I have lost the fortune he has found:
"Yes! Dick is kind, or he and his fine seat
"Might go to——where we never more should meet."

Now, lo! the Rayners all at Hulver Place—
Or Hulver Hall—'t is not a certain case;
'Tis only known that ladies' notes were sent
Directed both ways, and they always went.

We pass the greetings, and the dinner pass,
All the male gossip o'er the sparkling glass,
And female when retired:—The Squire invites
His Friend, by sleep refresh'd, to see his sights—
His land and lions, granary, barns and crops,
His dairy, piggery, pinery, apples, hops;—
But here a hill appears, and Peter Rayner stops.

"Ah! my old Friend, I give you joy," he cries:
"But some are born to fall, and some to rise;
'You're better many a thousand, I the worse—
"Dick, there 's no dealing with a failing purse;
"Nor does it shame me (mine is all mischance)
"To wish some friendly neighbour would advance"—
——But here the guest on such a theme was low.
His host, meantime, intent upon the show,

In hearing, heard not—they came out to see,—
And, pushing forward—"There 's a view!" quoth he;
"Observe that ruin, built, you see, to catch
"The gazer's eye; that cottage with the thatch—
"It cost me—guess you what?"—that sound of *cost*
Was accidental, but it was not lost.

"Ah! my good friend, be sure such things as these
"Suit well enough a man who lives at ease:
"Think what the 'Betsy' *cost*, and think the shock
"Of losing her upon the Dodder-Rock;
"The tidings reach'd me on the very day
"That villain robb'd us, and then ran away—
"Loss upon loss! now if——"

"Do stay a bit!"
Exclaim'd the Squire; "these matters hardly fit
"A morning ramble—let me show you now
"My team of oxen, and my patent plough.
"Talk of your horses! I the plan condemn—
"They eat us up—but oxen! we eat them:
"For first they plough and bring us bread to eat,
"And then we fat and kill them—there 's the meat.
"What 's your opinion?"—
"I am poorly fed,
"And much afraid to want both meat and bread,"
Said Rayner, half indignant; and the Squire
Sigh'd, as he felt he must no more require
A man whose prospects fail'd his prospects to admire.

Homeward they moved, and met a gentle pair,
The poor man's daughter and the rich man's heir:
This caused some thought; but on the couple went,
And a soft hour in tender converse spent.
This pair, in fact, their passion roused anew,
Alone much comfort from the visit drew.

At home the ladies were engaged, and all
Show'd or were shown the wonders of the Hall;
From room to room the weary guests went on,
Till every Rayner wish'd the show was done.

Home they return'd: the father deeply sigh'd
To find he vainly had for aid applied:
It hurt him much to ask—and more to be denied.

The younger Richard, who alone sustain'd
The dying friendship, true to love remain'd:
His Phœbe's smiles, although he did not yet
Fly to behold, he could not long forget;
Nor durst he visit; nor was love so strong,
That he could more than think his father wrong—
For, wrong or right, that father still profess'd
The most obedient son should fare the best.

So time pass'd on; the second spring appear'd
Ere Richard ventured on the deed he fear'd:—
He dared at length; and not so much for love,
I grieve to add, but that he meant to prove
He had a will:—His father, in reply,
This known, had answer'd, "So, my son, have *I*."

But Richard's courage was by prudence taught,
And he his nymph in secret service sought:
Some days of absence—not with full consent,
But with slow leave—were to entreaty lent;
And forth the Lover rode, uncertain what he meant.

He reach'd the dwelling he had known so long,
When a pert damsel took him, "he was wrong;
"Their house she did not just precisely know,
"But he would find it somewhere in *the Row*;
"The Rayners now were come a little down,
"Nor more the topmost people in the town;"
She might have added, they their life enjoy'd,
Although on things less hazardous employ'd.

This was not much; but yet the damsel's sneer,
And the Row-dwelling of a lass so dear,
Were somewhat startling. He had heard, indeed,
That Rayner's business did not well succeed:
"But what of that? They lived in decent style,
"No doubt, and Phœbe still retain'd her smile;
"And why," he asked, "should all men choose to dwell
"In broad cold streets?—the Row does just as well,
"Quiet and snug;" and then the favourite maid
Rose in his fancy, tastefully array'd,
Looking with grateful joy upon the swain,
Who could his love in trying times retain.

Soothed by such thoughts, to the new house he came,
Survey'd its aspect, sigh'd, and gave his name.
But ere they open'd he had waited long,
And heard a movement—Was there somewhat wrong?
Nay, but a friendly party, he was told;
And look'd around, as wishing to behold
Some friends—but these were not the friends of old.

Old Peter Rayner, in his own old mode,
Bade the Squire welcome to his new abode;
For Richard had been kind, and doubtless meant
To make proposals now, and ask consent.
Mamma and misses, too, were civil all;
But what their awkward courtesy to call
He knew not; neither could he well express
His sad sensations at their strange address;
And then their laughter loud, their story-telling,
All seem'd befitting to that Row and dwelling;
The hearty welcome to the various treat
Was lost on him—he could nor laugh nor eat.

But one thing pleased him; when he look'd around,
His dearest Phœbe could not there be found:
"Wise and discreet," he says, "she shuns the crew
"Of vulgar neighbours, some kind act to do;
"In some fair house some female friend to meet,
"Or take at evening prayer in church her seat."

Meantime there rose, amid the ceaseless din,
A mingled scent that crowded room within,
Rum and red-herring, Cheshire cheese and gin;

Pipes, too, and punch, and sausages, with tea,
Were things that Richard was disturb'd to see.
Impatient now, he left them in disdain,
To call on Phœbe when he call'd again;
To walk with her, the morning fair and bright,
And lose the painful feelings of the night.

All in the Row, and tripping at the side
Of a young Sailor, he the nymph espied,
As, homeward hastening with her happy boy,
She went to join the party, and enjoy.
"Fie!" Phœbe cried, as her companion spoke,
Yet laugh'd to hear the fie-compelling joke;—
Just then her chance to meet, her shame to know,
Her tender Richard, moving sad and slow,
Musing on things full strange, the manners of the Row.

At first amazed, and then alarm'd, the fair
Late-laughing maid now stood in dumb despair:
As when a debtor meets in human shape
The foe of debtors, and cannot escape,
He stands in terror, nor can longer aim
To keep his credit, or preserve his name,
Stood Phœbe fix'd! "Unlucky time and place!
"An earlier hour had kept me from disgrace!"
She thought—but now the sailor, undismay'd,
Said, "My dear Phœbe, why are you afraid?
"The man seems civil, or he soon should prove
"That I can well defend the girl I love.
"Are you not mine?" She utter'd no reply:—
"Thine I must be," she thought; "more foolish I!"
While Richard at the scene stood mute and wondering by.

His spirits hurried, but his bosom light,
He left his Phœbe with a calm "Good night."
So Love like Friendship fell! The youth a while
Dreamt, sorely moved, of Phœbe's witching smile,—
But learn'd in daylight visions to forego
The Sailor's laughing Lass, the Phœbe of the Row.

Home turn'd young Richard, in due time to turn,
With all old Richard's zeal, the leaves of Burn;
And home turned Phœbe—in due time to grace
A tottering cabin with a tatter'd race.

TALE XVIII.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE BOAT-RACE.

I.

THE man who dwells where party-spirit reigns
May feel its triumphs, but must wear its chains;
He must the friends and foes of party take
For his, and suffer for his honour's sake;
When once enlisted upon either side,
He must the rude septennial storm abide—
A storm that, when its utmost rage is gone,
In cold and angry mutterings murmurs on:
A slow unbending scorn, a cold disdain,
Till years bring the full tempest back again.

Within our Borough two stiff sailors dwelt,
Who both this party storm and triumph felt;
Men who had talents, and were both design'd
For better things, but anger made them blind.

In the same year they married, and their wives
Had pass'd in friendship their yet peaceful lives,
And, as they married in a time of peace,
Had no suspicion that their love must cease.
In fact it did not; but they met by stealth,
And that perhaps might keep their love in health;
Like children watch'd, desirous yet afraid,
Their visits all were with discretion paid.

One Captain, so by courtesy we call
Our boys' commanders—they are captains all—
Had sons and daughters many; while but one
The rival Captain bless'd—a darling son.
Each was a burgess to his party tied,
And each was fix'd, but on a different side;
And he who sought his son's pure mind to fill
With wholesome food, would evil too instil.
The last in part succeeded—but in part—
For *Charles* had sense, had virtue, had a heart;
And he had soon the cause of Nature tried
With the stern father, but this father died;
Who on his deathbed thus his son address'd:—
"Swear to me, Charles, and let my spirit rest—
"Swear to our party to be ever true,
"And let me die in peace—I pray thee, do."

With some reluctance, but obedience more,
The weeping youth reflected, sigh'd, and swore;
Trembling he swore for ever to be true,
And wear no colour but the untainted Blue:
This done, the Captain died in so much joy,
As if he'd wrought salvation for his boy.

The female friends their wishes yet retain'd,
But seldom met, by female fears restrain'd;
Yet in such town, where girls and boys must meet,
And every house is known in every street,
Charles had before, nay since his father's death,
Met, say by chance, the young Elizabeth,
Who was both good and graceful, and in truth
Was but too pleasing to th' observing youth;
And why I know not, but the youth to her
Seem'd just that being that she could prefer.
Both were disposed to think that party-strife
Destroy'd the happiest intercourse of life;
Charles, too, his growing passion could defend—
His father's foe he call'd his mother's friend.
Mothers, indeed, he knew were ever kind,
But in the Captain should he favour find?
He doubted this—yet could he that command
Which fathers love, and few its power withstand.

The mothers both agreed their joint request
Should to the Captain jointly be address'd;

And first the lover should his heart assail,
And then the ladies; and if all should fail,
They 'd singly watch the hour, and jointly might
prevail.

The Captain's heart, although unused to melt,
A strong impression from persuasion felt;
His pride was soften'd by the prayers he heard,
And then advantage in the match appear'd.

At length he answer'd,—"Let the lad enlist
"In our good cause, and I no more resist;
"For I have sworn, and to my oath am true,
"To hate that colour, that rebellious Blue.
"His father once, ere master of the brig,
"For that advantage turn'd a rascal Whig:
"Now let the son—a wife's a better thing—
"A Tory turn, and say, God save the King!
"For I am pledged to serve that sacred cause,
"And love my country, while I keep her laws."

The women trembled; for they knew full well
The fact they dare not to the Captain tell;
And the poor youth declared, with tears and
sighs,
"My oath was pass'd: I dare not compromise."

But Charles to reason made his strong appeal,
And to the heart—he bade him think and feel:
The Captain answering with reply as strong,—
"If you be right, then how can I be wrong?
"You to your father swore to take his part;
"I to oppose it ever, head and heart;
"You to a parent made your oath, and I
"To God! and can I to my Maker lie?
"Much, my dear lad, I for your sake would do,
"But I have sworn, and to my oath am true."

Thus stood the parties when my fortunes bore
Me far away from this my native shore:
And who prevail'd I know not—Young or Old;
But, I beseech you, let the tale be told.

II.

P.—How fared these lovers? Many a time I
thought
How with their ill-starr'd passion Time had
wrought.
Did either party from his oath recede,
Or were they never from the bondage freed?

F.—Alas! replied my Friend, the tale I tell
With some reluctance, nor can do it well.
There are three females in the place, and they,
Like skilful painters, could the facts portray
In their strong colours—all that I can do
Is to present a weak imperfect view;
The colours I must leave—the outlines shall be
true.

Soon did each party see the other's mind,
What bound them both, and what was like to bind;
Oaths deeply taken in such time and place,
To break them now was dreadful—was disgrace!

"That oath a dying father bade me take,
"Can I—yourself a father—can I break?"
"That oath which I, a living sinner, took,
"Shall I make void, and yet for mercy look?"

The women wept; the men themselves, distress'd,
The cruel rage of party zeal confess'd:
But solemn oaths, though sprung from party zeal,
Feel them we must, as Christians ought to feel.

Yet shall a youth so good, a girl so fair,
From their obedience only draw despair?
Must they be parted? Is there not a way
For them both love and duty to obey?
Strongly they hoped; and by their friends around
A way, at least a lover's way, was found.

"Give up your vote; you 'll then no longer be
"Free in one sense, but in the better free."
Such was of reasoning friends the kind advice,
And how could lovers in such case be nice?
A man may swear to walk directly on
While sight remains; but how if sight be gone?
"Oaths are not binding when the party 's dead;
"Or when the power to keep the oath is fled:
"If I 've no vote, I 've neither friend nor foe,
"Nor can be said on either side to go."
They were no casuists:—"Well!" the Captain
cried,
"Give up your vote, man, and behold your
bride!"

Thus was it fix'd, and fix'd the day for both
To take the vow, and set aside the oath.
It gave some pain, but all agreed to say,
"You 're now absolved, and have no other way:
"'T is not expected you should love resign
"For man's commands, for Love's are all divine."

When all is quiet and the mind at rest,
All in the calm of innocence are bless'd;
But when some scruple mixes with our joy,
We love to give the anxious mind employ.

In autumn late, when evening suns were bright,
The day was fix'd the lovers to unite;
But one before the eager Captain chose
To break, with jocund act, his girl's repose,
And, sailor-like, said, "Hear how I intend
"One day, before the day of days, to spend!
"All round the quay, and by the river's side,
"Shall be a scene of glory for the bride.
"We 'll have a Race, and colours will devise
"For every boat, for every man a prize:
"But that which first returns shall bear away
"The proudest pendant—Let us name the day.

They named the day, and never morn more
bright
Rose on the river, nor so proud a sight:
Or if *too* calm appear'd the cloudless skies,
Experienced seamen said the wind would rise.
To that full quay from this then vacant place
Throng'd a vast crowd to see the promised Race.
Mid boats new painted, all with streamers fair,
That flagg'd or flutter'd in that quiet air—
The Captain's boat that was so gay and trim,
That made his pride, and seem'd as proud of
him—

Her, in her beauty, we might all discern,
Her rigging new, and painted on the stern,
As one who could not in the contest fail,
"Learn of *the little Nautilus* to sail."

So forth they started at the signal gun,
And down the river had three leagues to run;
This sail'd, they then their watery way retrace,
And the first landed conquers in the race.
The crowd await till they no more discern,
Then parting say, "At evening we return."

I could proceed, but you will guess the fate,
And but too well my tale anticipate.

P.—True! yet proceed.

F.—The lovers had some grief
In this day's parting, but the time was brief;
And the poor girl, between his smiles and sighs,
Ask'd, "Do you wish to gain so poor a prize?"

"But that your father wishes," he replied,
"I would the honour had been still denied:
"It makes me gloomy, though I would be gay,
"And, oh! it seems an everlasting day."
So thought the lass, and as she said Farewell!
Soft sighs arose, and tears unbidden fell.

The morn was calm, and e'en till noon the strong
Unruffled flood moved quietly along:
In the dead calm the billows softly fell,
And mock'd the whistling sea-boy's favourite spell.
So rests at noon the reaper, but to rise
With mightier force and twofold energies.
The deep, broad stream moved softly, all was hush'd,
When o'er the flood the breeze awakening brush'd;
A sullen sound was heard along the deep,
The stormy spirit rousing from his sleep;
The porpoise rolling on the troubled wave,
Unwieldy tokens of his pleasure gave:
Dark, chilling clouds the troubled deep deform,
And, led by terror, downward rush'd the storm.

As evening came, along the river's side,
Or on the quay, impatient crowds divide,
And then collect; some whispering, as afraid
Of what they saw, and more of what they said,
And yet must speak: how sudden and how great
The danger seem'd, and what might be the fate
Of men so toss'd about in craft so small,
Lost in the dark, and subject to the squall.
Then sounds are so appalling in the night,
And, could we see, how terrible the sight!
None knew the evils that they all suspect,
And hope at once they covet and reject.

But where the wife, her friend, her daughter, where?
Alas! in grief, in terror, in despair—
At home, abroad, upon the quay. No rest
In any place, but where they are not, best.
Fearful they ask, but dread the sad reply,
And many a sailor tells the friendly lie—
"There is no danger—that is, we believe,
"And think, and hope"—but this does not deceive,
Although it soothes them; while they look around,
Trembling at every sight and every sound.

Let me not dwell on terrors——It is dark,
And lights are carried to and fro, and hark!
There is a cry—"A boat, a boat at hand!"
What a still terror is there now on land!
"Whose, whose?" they all inquire, and none can understand.

At length they come—and, oh! how then rejoice
A wife and children at that welcome voice:
It is not theirs—but what have these to tell?
"Where did you leave the Captain—were they well?"
Alas! they know not, they had felt an awe
In dread of death, and knew not what they saw.
Thus they depart.—The evening darker grows,
The lights shake wildly, and as wildly blows
The stormy night-wind: fear possesses all,
The hardest hearts, in this sad interval.

But hark again to voices loud and high!
Once more that hope, that dread, that agony,
That panting expectation! "Oh! reveal
"What must be known, and think what pangs we feel!"

In vain they ask! The men now landed speak
Confused and quick, and to escape them seek.
Our female party on a sailor press,
But nothing learn that makes their terror less;
Nothing the man can show, or nothing will confess.
To some, indeed, they whisper, bringing news
For them alone, but others they refuse;
And steal away, as if they could not bear
The griefs they cause, and if they cause must share.

They too are gone! and our unhappy Three,
Half wild with fear, are trembling on the quay.
They can no ease, no peace, no quiet find,
The storm is gathering in the troubled mind;
Thoughts after thoughts in wild succession rise,
And all within is changing like the skies.
Their friends persuade them, "Do depart, we pray!"
They will not, must not, cannot go away,
But, chill'd with icy fear, for certain tidings stay.

And now again there must a boat be seen—
Men run together! It must something mean!
Some figure moves upon the ousy bound
Where flows the tide—Oh! what can he have found—
What lost? And who is he?—The only one
Of the loved three—the Captain's younger son.
Their boat was fill'd and sank—He knows no more,
But that he only hardly reach'd the shore.
He saw them swimming—for he once was near—
But he was sinking, and he could not hear;
And then the waves curl'd round him, but at length
He struck upon the boat with dying strength,

And that preserved him; when he turn'd around,
Nought but the dark, wild, billowy flood was found—
That flood was all he saw, that flood's the only sound—
Save that the angry wind, with ceaseless roar,
Dash'd the wild waves upon the rocky shore.

The Widows dwell together—so we call
The younger woman; widow'd are they all:
But she, the poor Elizabeth, it seems
Not life in her—she lives not, but she dreams;
She looks on Philip, and in him can find
Not much to mark in body or in mind—
He who was saved; and then her very soul
Is in that scene!—Her thoughts beyond control,
Fix'd on that night, and bearing her along,
Amid the waters terrible and strong;
Till there she sees within the troubled waves
The bodies sinking in their wat'ry graves,
When from her lover, yielding up his breath,
There comes a voice,—"Farewell, Elizabeth!"

Yet Resignation in the house is seen,
Subdued Affliction, Piety serene,
And Hope for ever striving to instil
The balm for grief—"It is the Heavenly will:"
And in that will our duty bids us rest,
For all that Heaven ordains is good, is best:
We sin and suffer—this alone we know;
Grief is our portion, is our part below:
But we shall rise, that world of bliss to see,
Where sin and suffering never more shall be.

TALE XIX.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

MASTER WILLIAM; OR, LAD'S LOVE.

I.

I HAVE remembrance of a Boy, whose mind
Was weak: he seem'd not for the world design'd,
Seem'd not as one who in that world could strive,
And keep his spirits even and alive—
A feeling Boy, and happy, though the less,
From that fine feeling, form'd for happiness.
His mother left him to his favourite ways,
And what he made his pleasure brought him praise.

Romantic, tender, visionary, mild,
Affectionate, reflecting when a child,
With fear instinctive he from harshness fled,
And gentle tears for all who suffer'd shed;
Tales of misfortune touch'd his generous heart,
Of maidens left, and lovers forced to part.

In spite of all that weak indulgence wrought,
That love permitted, or that flattery taught,
In spite of teachers who no fault would find,
The Boy was neither selfish nor unkind.

Justice and truth his honest heart approved,
And all things lovely he admired and loved.
Arabian Nights and Persian Tales he read,
And his pure mind with brilliant wonders fed.
The long Romances, wild Adventures fired
His stirring thoughts: he felt like Boy inspired.
The cruel fight, the constant love, the art
Of vile magicians, thrill'd his inmost heart:
An early Quixote, dreaming dreadful sights
Of warring dragons and victorious knights:
In every dream some beauteous Princess shown,
The pride of thousands and the prize of one.

Not yet he read, nor, reading, would approve,
The Novel's hero, or its ladies' love.
He would Sophia for a wanton take,
Jones for a wicked, nay a vulgar rake.
He would no time on Smollett's page bestow;
Such men he knew not, would disdain to know;
And if he read, he travell'd slowly on,
Teazed by the tame and faultless Grandison.
He in that hero's deeds could not delight—
"He loved two ladies, and he would not fight."
The minor works of this prolific kind
Presented beings he could never find;
Beings, he thought, that no man should describe,
A vile, intriguing, lying, perjured tribe,
With impious habits, and dishonest views;—
The men he knew had souls they fear'd to lose;
These had no views that could their sins control,
With them nor fears nor hopes disturb'd the soul.

To dear Romance with fresh delight he turn'd,
And vicious men, like recreant cowards, spurn'd.

The Scripture Stories he with reverence read,
And duly took his Bible to his bed.
Yet Joshua, Samson, David, were a race
He dared not with his favourite heroes place.
Young as he was, the difference well he knew
Between the Truth and what we fancy true.
He was with these entranced, of those afraid;
With Guy he triumph'd, but with David pray'd.

II.

P.—Such was the Boy, and what the man would be
I might conjecture, but could not foresee.

F.—He has his trials met, his troubles seen,
And now deluded, now deserted been.
His easy nature has been oft assail'd
By grief assumed, scorn hid, and flattery veil'd.

P.—But has he, safe and cautious, shunn'd the snares
That life presents?—I ask not of its cares.

F.—Your gentle Boy a course of life began,
That made him what he is, the gentle-man,
A man of business. He in courts presides
Among their Worships, whom his judgment guides.
He in the Temple studied, and came down
A very lawyer, though without a gown;
Still he is kind, but prudent, steady, just,
And takes but little that he hears on trust;

He has no visions now, no boyish plans;
All his designs and prospects are the man's—
The man of sound discretion.

P.—How so made?
What could his mind to change like this persuade?
What first awaken'd our romantic friend?—
For such he is.

F.—If you would know, attend.

In those gay years, when boys their manhood prove,
Because they talk of girls, and dream of love,
In William's way there came a maiden fair,
With soft, meek look, and sweet retiring air;
With just the rosy tint upon her cheek,
With sparkling eye, and tongue unused to speak;
With manner decent, quiet, chaste, that one,
Modest himself, might love to look upon,
As William look'd; and thus the gentle Squire
Began the Nymph, albeit poor, t' admire.
She was, to wit, the gard'ner's niece; her place
Gave to her care the Lady's silks and lace:
With other duties of an easy kind,
And left her time, as much she felt inclined,
T' adorn her graceful form, and fill her craving mind,—
Nay, left her leisure to employ some hours
Of the long day among her uncle's flowers—
Myrtle and rose, of which she took the care,
And was as sweet as pinks and lilies are.

Such was the damsel whom our Youth beheld
With passion unencouraged, unrepell'd;
For how encourage what was not in view?
Or how repel what strove not to pursue?

What books inspired, or glowing fancy wrought,
What dreams suggested, or reflection taught,
Whate'er of love was to the mind convey'd,
Was all directed to his darling maid.
He saw his damsel with a lover's eyes,
As pliant fancy wove the fair disguise;
A Quixote he, who in his nymph could trace
The high-born beauty, changed and—out of place,
That William loved, mamma, with easy smile,
Would jesting say; but love *might* grow the while;
The damsel's self, with unassuming pride,
With love, so led by fear, was gratified.

What cause for censure? Could a man reprove
A child for fondness, or miscall it love?
Not William's self; yet well inform'd was he
That love it was, and endless love would be.
Month after month the sweet delusion bred
Wild feverish hopes, that flourish'd, and then fled,
Like Fanny's sweetest flower, and that was lost
In one cold hour, by one harsh morning frost.

In some soft evenings, mid the garden's bloom,
Would William wait, till Fanny chanced to come;
And Fanny came, by chance it may be; still,
There was a gentle bias of the will,
Such as the soundest minds may act upon,
When motives of superior kind are gone.
There then they met, and Master William's look
Was the less timid, for he held a book;
And when the sweetness of the evening hours,
The fresh soft air, the beauty of the flowers,
The night-bird's note, the gently falling dew,
Were all discuss'd, and silence would ensue,
There were some lovely Lines—if she could stay—
And Fanny rises not to go away.

"Young Paris was the shepherds' pride,
As well the fair Ænone knew;
They sat the mountain stream beside,
And o'er the bank a poplar grew.

Upon its bark this verse he traced,—
Bear witness to the vow I make:
Thou, Xanthus, to thy source shalt haste,
E'er I my matchless maid forsake.

No prince or peasant lad am I,
Nor crown nor crook to me belong,
But I will love thee *till* I die,
And die before I do thee wrong.

Back to thy source now, Xanthus, run;
Paris is now a prince of Troy;
He leaves the Fair his flattery won,
Himself and country to destroy.

He seizes on a sovereign's wife,
The pride of Greece, and with her flies;
He causes thus a ten years' strife,
And with his dying parent dies.

Oh! think me not this Shepherd's Boy,
Who from the Maid he loves would run:
Oh! think me not a Prince of Troy,
By whom such treacherous deeds are done."

The Lines were read, and many an idle word
Pronounced with emphasis, and underscored,
As if the writer had resolved that all
His nouns and verbs should be emphatical:
But what they were the damsel little thought,
The sense escaped her, but the voice she caught,
Soft, tender, trembling; and the gipsy felt
As if by listening she unfairly dealt:
For she, if not mamma, had rightly guess'd
That William's bosom was no seat of rest.

But Love's young hope must die.—There was a day
When nature smiled, and all around was gay;
The Boy o'ertook the damsel as she went
The village road—unknown was her intent;
He, happy hour, when lock'd in Fanny's arm,
Walk'd on enamour'd, every look a charm;
Yet her soft looks were but her heart's disguise,
There was no answering love in Fanny's eyes;

But, or by prudence or by pity moved,
She thought it time his folly was reproved;
Then took her measures, not perchance without
Some conscious pride in what she was about

Along the brook with gentle pace they go,
The youth unconscious of th' impending woe;
And oft he urged the absent Maid to talk,
As she was wont in many a former walk;
And still she slowly walk'd beside the brook,
Or look'd around—for what could Fanny look?
Something there must be! What, did not appear;
But William's eye betray'd the anxious fear;
The cause unseen!——
But who, with giant-stride,
Bounds o'er the brook, and is at Fanny's side?
Who takes her arm? and, oh! what villain dares
To press those lips? Not e'en her lips he spares!
Nay, she herself, the Fanny, the divine,
Lip to his lip can wickedly incline!
The lad, unnerved by horror, with an air
Of wonder quits her arm and looks despair;
Nor will proceed. Oh, no! he must return,
Though his drown'd sight cannot the path discern.

"Come, Master William! come, sir, let us on.
"What can you fear? You 're not afraid of John?"

"What ails our youngster?" quoth the burly swain,
Six feet in height—but he inquires in vain.
William, in deep resentment, scans the frame
Of the fond giant, and abhors his name;
Thinks him a demon of th' infernal brood,
And longs to shed his most pernicious blood.

Again the monster spake in thoughtless joy,—
"We shall be married soon, my pretty Boy!
"And dwell in Madam's cottage, where you 'll see
"The strawberry-beds, and cherries on the tree."

Back to his home in silent scorn return'd
Th' indignant Boy, and all endearment spurn'd.
Fanny perforce with Master takes her way,
But finds him to th' o'erwhelming grief a prey,
Wrapt in resentful silence, till he came
Where he might vent his woes and hide his shame.

Fierce was his strife, but with success he strove,
And freed his troubled breast from fruitless love;
Or what of love his reason fail'd to cool
Was lost and perish'd in a public school,—
Those seats and sources both of good and ill,
By what they cure in Boys, and what they kill.

TALE XX.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE WILL.

I.

Thus to his Friend an angry Father spoke—
"Nay, do not think that I the Will revoke.
"My cruel Son in every way I 've tried,
"And every vice have found in him but pride;
"For he, of pride possess'd, would meaner vices hide.
"Money he wastes, I will not say he spends;
"He neither makes the poor nor rich his friends—
"To those he nothing gives, to these he never lends.

"'T is for himself each legal pale he breaks;
"He joins the miser's spirit to the rake's:
"Like the worst Roman in the worst of times,
"He can be guilty of conflicting crimes;
"Greedy of other's wealth, unknown the use,
"And of his own contemptuously profuse.

"To such a mind shall I my wealth confide,
"That you to nobler, worthier ends, may guide?
"No! let my Will my scorn of vice express,
"And let him learn repentance from distress."

So said the Father; and the Friend, who spurn'd
Wealth ill acquired, his sober speech return'd:—
"The youth is faulty, but his faults are weigh'd
"With a strong bias, and by wrath repaid;
"Pleasure deludes him, not the vain design
"Of making vices unallied combine.
"He wastes your wealth, for he is yet a boy;
"He covets more, for he would more enjoy.
"For, my good friend, believe me, very few,
"At once are prodigals and misers too—
"The spendthrift vice engrafted on the Je[illegible]
"Leave me one thousand pounds; for I confess
"I have my wants, and will not tax you less.
"But your estate let this young man enjoy:
"If he reforms, you 've saved a grateful boy;
"If not, a father's cares and troubles cease;
"You 've done your duty, and may rest in peace."

The Will in hand, the Father musing stood,
Then gravely answered, "Your advice is good;
"Yet take the paper, and in safety keep;
"I 'll make another Will before I sleep:
"But if I hear of some atrocious deed,
"That deed I 'll burn, and yours will then succeed.
"Two thousand I bequeath you. No reproof!
"And there are small bequests—he 'll have enough.
"For if he wastes, he would with all be poor;
"And if he wastes not, he will need no more."

The Friends then parted! this the Will possess'd,
And that another made—so things had rest.

George, who was conscious that his father grew
Sick and infirm, engaged in nothing new;

No letters came from injured man or maid,
No bills from wearied duns that must be paid,
No fierce reproaches from deserted fair,
Mix'd with wild tenderness of desperate prayer;
So hope rose softly in the parent's breast:
He dying call'd his son, and fondly bless'd,
Hail'd the propitious tear, and mildly sunk to rest.

Unhappy youth! e'er yet the tomb was closed,
And dust to dust convey'd in peace reposed,
He sought his father's closet, search'd around,
To find a Will,—the important Will was found.

Well pleased he read, "These lands, this manor, all,
"Now call me master!—I obey the call."
Then from the window look'd the valley o'er,
And never saw it look so rich before.
He view'd the dairy, view'd the men at plough,
With other eyes, with other feelings now,
And with a new-form'd taste found beauty in a cow.
The distant swain who drove the plough along
Was a good useful slave, and passing strong!
In short, the view was pleasing, nay, was fine,
"Good as my father's, excellent as mine!"

Again he reads,—but he had read enough:
What follow'd put his virtue to a proof.
"How this?—to David Wright two thousand pounds!
"A monstrous sum! beyond all reason!—zounds!
"This is your friendship running out of bounds.

"Then here are cousins Susan, Robert, Joe,
"Five hundred each. Do they deserve it? No!
"Claim they have none—I wonder if they know
"What the good man intended to bestow!
"This might be paid—but Wright's enormous sum
"Is—I 'm alone—there's nobody can come—
"'Tis all his hand, no lawyer was employ'd
"To write this prose, that ought to be destroy'd!
"To no attorney would my father trust;
"He wish'd his son to judge of what was just;
"As if he said, 'My boy will find the Will,
"'And, as he likes, destroy it or fulfil.'
"This, now, is reason, this I understand—
"What was at his, is now at my command.
"As for this paper, with these cousiny names,
"I—'t is *my* Will—commit it to the flames.
"Hence! disappear! Now am I lord alone;
"They 'll groan, I know, but, curse them! let them groan.
"Who wants his money like a new-made heir,
"To put all things in order and repair?
"I need the whole the worthy man could save,
"To do my father credit in his grave:
"It takes no trifle to have squires convey'd
"To their last house with honour and parade.
"All this, attended by a world of cost,
"Requires, demands, that nothing should be lost.
"These fond bequests cannot demanded be—
"Where no Will is, can be no legacy!
"And none is here! I safely swear it—none!—
"The very ashes are dispersed and gone.

"All would be well, would that same sober friend,
"That Wright, my father on his way attend:
"My fears—but why afraid?—my troubles then would end."

In triumph, yet in trouble, meets our Squire
The friends assembled, who a Will require.
"There is no Will," he said. They murmur and retire.

Days pass away, while yet the heir is bless'd
By pleasant cares, and thoughts that banish rest;
When comes the Friend, and asks, in solemn tone,
If he may see the busy Squire alone.

They are in private—all about is still—
When thus the Guest:—"Your father left a Will,
"And I would see it."—Rising in reply,
The youth beheld a fix'd and piercing eye,
From which his own receded; and the sound
Of his own words was in disorder drown'd.
He answer'd softly,—"I in vain have spent
"Days in the search; I pray you be content;
"And if a Will——" The pertinacious man,
At if displeased, with steady tone began,—
"There *is* a Will—produce it, for you can."

"Sir, I have sought in vain, and what the use?
"What has no being, how can I produce?"

"Two days I give you; to my words attend,"
Was the reply, "and let the business end."

Two days were past, and still the same reply
To the same question—"Not a Will have I."
More grave, more earnest, then the Friend appear'd:
He spoke with power, as one who would be heard,—
"A Will your father made! I witness'd one."
The heir arose in anger—"Sir, begone!
"Think you my spirit by your looks to awe?
"Go to your lodgings, friend, or to your law:
"To what would you our easy souls persuade?
"Once more I tell you, not a Will was made:
"There 's none with me, I swear it—now, deny
"This if you can!"—
"That, surely, cannot I;
"Nay, I believe you, and, as no such deed
"Is found with you, *this* surely will succeed!"

He said, and from his pocket slowly drew
Of the first testament a copy true,
And held it spread abroad, that he might see it too.
"Read and be sure: your parent's pleasure see—
"Then leave this mansion and these lands to me."

He said, and terror seized the guilty youth;
He saw his misery, meanness, and the truth;
Could not before his stern accuser stand,
Yet could not quit that hall, that park, that land;
But when surprise had pass'd away, his grief
Began to think in law to find relief.

"While courts are open, why should I despair?
"Juries will feel for an abandon'd heir:

" I will resist," he said, impell'd by pride;—
" I must submit," recurring fear replied.
As wheels the vane when winds around it play,
So his strong passions turn'd him every way;
But growing terrors seized th' unhappy youth:
He knew the Man, and more he knew—the Truth.
When, stung by all he fear'd, and all he felt,
He sought for mercy; and in terror knelt.

Grieved, but indignant,—" Let me not despise
" Thy father's son," replied the Friend: " arise!
" To my fix'd purpose your attention lend,
" And know, your fate will on yourself depend.

" Thou shalt not want, young man, nor yet abound,
" And time shall try thee, if thy heart be sound;
" Thou shalt be watch'd till thou hast learn'd to know
" Th' All-seeing Watcher of the world below,
" And worlds above, and thoughts within; from Whom
" Must be thy certain, just, and final doom.
" Thy doors all closely barr'd, thy windows blind,
" Before all silent, silent all behind—
" Thy hand was stretch'd to do whate'er thy soul
" In secret would—no mortal could control.
" Oh, fool! to think that thou thy act couldst keep
" From that All-piercing Eye which cannot sleep!

" Go to thy trial!—and may I with thee,
" A fellow-sinner, who to mercy flee,
" That mercy find, as justly I dispense
" Between thy frailty and thy penitence.

" Go to thy trial! and be wise in time,
" And know that no man can conceal a crime.
" God and his Conscience witness all that 's done,
" And these he cannot cheat, he cannot shun.
" What, then, could fortune, what could safety give,
" If he with these at enmity must live?

" Go!"—and the young man from his presence went,
Confused, uncertain of his own intent—
To sin, if pride prevail'd; if soften'd, to repent.

II.

P.—Lives yet the Friend of that unhappy Boy,
Who could the Will that made him rich destroy,
And made him poor? And what the after-plan,
For one so selfish, of that stern, good man?

F.—" Choose," said this Friend, " thy way in life, and I
" Will means to aid thee in thy work supply."
He will the army, thought this guardian, choose,
And there the sense of his dishonour lose.

Humbly he answer'd,—" With your kind consent,
" Of your estate I would a portion rent,
" And farm with care——"
" Alas! the wretched fruit
" Of evil habit! he will hunt and shoot."

So judged the Friend, but soon perceived a change,
To him important, and to all men strange.
Industrious, temperate, with the sun he rose,
And of his time gave little to repose:
Nor to the labour only bent his will,
But sought experience, and improved with skill;
With cautious prudence placed his gains to use,
Inquiring always, " What will this produce?"

The Friend, not long suspicious, now began
To think more kindly of the alter'd man—
In his opinion alter'd, but, in truth,
The same the spirit that still ruled the youth:
That dwelt within, where other demons dwell,
Avarice unsated, and insatiable.

But this Wright saw not: He was more inclined
To trace the way of a repenting mind:
And he was now by strong disease assail'd,
That quickly o'er the vital powers prevail'd:
And now the son had all, was rich beyond
His fondest hope, and he, indeed, was fond.

His life's great care has been his zeal to prove,
And time to dotage has increased his love.
A Miser now, the one strong passion guides
The heart and soul: there 's not a love besides.
Where'er he comes, he sees in every face
A look that tells him of his own disgrace.
Men's features vary, but the mildest show
" It is a tale of infamy we know."
Some with contempt the wealthy miser view,
Some with disgust, yet mix'd with pity too;
A part the looks of wrath and hatred wear,
And some, less happy, lose their scorn in fear.

Meanwhile, devoid of kindness, comfort, friends,
On his possessions solely he depends.

Yet is he wretched; for his fate decrees
That his own feelings should deny him ease.
With talents gifted, he himself reproves,
And can but scorn the vile pursuit he loves;
He can but feel that there abides within
The secret shame, the unrepented sin,
And the strong sense, that bids him to confess
He has not found the way to happiness.

But 't is the way where he has travell'd long,
And turn he will not, though he feels it wrong:
Like a sad traveller, who, at closing day,
Finds he has wander'd widely from his way,
Yet wanders on, nor will new paths explore,
Till the night falls, and he can walk no more.

TALE XXI.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

THE COUSINS.

I.

P.—I LEFT a frugal Merchant, who began
Early to thrive, and grew a wealthy man:
Retired from business with a favourite Niece,
He lived in plenty, or if not—in peace.
Their small affairs, conforming to his will,
The maiden managed with superior skill.
He had a Nephew too, a brother's child,—
But *James* offended, for the lad was wild:
And *Patty's* tender soul was vex'd to hear,
"Your Cousin James will rot in gaol, my dear:
"And now I charge you, by no kind of gift
"Show him that folly may be help'd by thrift."
This Patty heard, but in her generous mind
Precept so harsh could no admission find.

Her Cousin James, too sure in prison laid,
With strong petitions plied the gentle maid,
That she would humbly on their Uncle press
His deep repentance and his sore distress;
How that he mourn'd in durance, night and day,
And which removed, he would for ever pray.

"Nought will I give his worthless life to save,"
The Uncle said; and nought in fact he gave:
But the kind maiden from her pittance took
All that she could, and gave with pitying look;
For soft compassion in her bosom reign'd,
And her heart melted when the Youth complain'd.
Of his complaints the Uncle loved to hear,
As Patty told them, shedding many a tear;
While he would wonder how the girl could pray
For a young rake, to place him in her way,
Or once admit him in his Uncle's view;
"But these," said he, "are things that women do."

Thus were the Cousins, young, unguarded, fond,
Bound in true friendship—so they named the bond,
Nor call'd it love; and James resolved, when free,
A most correct and frugal man to be.
He sought her prayers, but not for heavenly aid:
"Pray to my Uncle," and she kindly pray'd—
"James will be careful," said the Niece; "and I
"Will be as careful," was the stern reply.

Thus he resisted, and I know not how
He could be soften'd—Is he kinder now?
Hard was his heart; but yet a heart of steel
May melt in dying, and dissolving feel.

II.

F.—What were his feelings I can not explain,
His actions only on my mind remain.
He never married, that indeed we know,
But childless was not, as his foes could show;—
Perhaps his friends—for friends, as well as foes,
Will the infirmities of man disclose.

When young, our Merchant, though of sober fame,
Had a rude passion that he could not tame;
And, not to dwell upon the passion's strife,
He had a Son, who never had a wife;
The father paid just what the law required,
Nor saw the infant, nor to see desired.
That infant, thriving on the parish fare,
Without a parent's love, consent, or care,
Became a sailor, and sustain'd his part
So like a man, it touch'd his father's heart:—
He for protection gave the ready pay,
And placed the seaman in preferment's way;
Who doubted not, with sanguine heart, to rise,
And bring home riches, gain'd from many a prize.
But Jack—for so we call'd him—Jack once more,
And never after, touch'd his native shore:
Nor was it known if he in battle fell,
Or sickening died—we sought, but none could tell.
The father sigh'd—as some report, he wept;
And then his sorrow with the Sailor slept:
Then age came on; he found his spirits droop,
And his kind Niece remained the only hope.

Premising this, our story then proceeds—
Our gentle Patty for her Cousin pleads;
And now her Uncle, to his room confined,
And kindly nursed, was soften'd and was kind.
James, whom the law had from his prison sent,
With much contrition to his Uncle went,
And, humbly kneeling, said, "Forgive me; I repent."
Reproach, of course, his humbled spirit bore;
He knew for pardon anger opes the door;
The man whom we with too much warmth reprove
Has the best chance our softening hearts to move;
And this he had—"Why, Patty, love! it seems,"
Said the old man, "there 's something good in James:
"I must forgive: but you, my child, are yet
"My stay and prop; I cannot this forget.
"Still, my dear Niece, as a reforming man,
"I mean to aid your Cousin, if I can."
Then Patty smiled, for James and she had now
Time for their loves, and pledged the constant vow.

James the fair way to favouring thoughts discern'd—
He learn'd the news, and told of all he learn'd;
Read all the papers in an easy style,
And knew the bits would raise his Uncle's smile;
Then would refrain, to hear the good man say,
"You did not come as usual yesterday;
"I must not take you from your duties, lad,
"But of your daily visits should be glad!"

Patty was certain that their Uncle now
Would their affection all it ask'd allow;
She was convinced her lover now would find
The past forgotten and old Uncle kind.
"It matters not," she added, "who receives
"The larger portion; what to one he leaves
"We both inherit! let us nothing hide,
"Dear James, from him in whom we both confide."

"Not for your life!" quoth James. "Let Uncle choose
"Our ways for us—or we the way shall lose.
"For know you, Cousin, all these miser men——"
"Nay, my dear James!"—
"Our worthy Uncle, then,
"And all like Uncle, like to be obey'd
"By their dependants, who must seem afraid
"Of their own will:—if we to wed incline,
"You 'll quickly hear him peevishly repine,
"Object, dispute, and sundry reasons give,
"To prove we ne'er could find the means to live;
"And then, due credit for his speech to gain,
"He 'll leave us poor—lest wealth should prove it vain.
"Let him propose the measure, and then we
"May for his pleasure to his plan agree.
"I, when at last assenting, shall be still
"But giving way to a kind Uncle's will;
"Then will he deem it just amends to make
"To one who ventures all things for his sake;
"So, should you deign to take this worthless hand,
"Be sure, dear Patty, 't is at his command."

But Patty question'd—"Is it, let me ask,
"The will of God that we should wear a mask?"
This startled James: he lifted up his eyes,
And said, with some contempt, besides surprise,
"Patty, my love! the will of God, 't is plain,
"Is that we live by what we can obtain:
"Shall we a weak and foolish man offend,
"And when our trial is so near our end?"

This hurt the maiden, and she said, "'T is well!
"Unask'd I will not of your purpose tell,
"But will not lie."—
"Lie! Patty, no, indeed,
"Your downright lying never will succeed!
"A better way our prudence may devise,
"Than such unprofitable things as lies.
"Yet, a dependant, if he would not starve,
"The way through life must with discretion carve;
"And, though a lie he may with pride disdain,
"He must not every useless truth maintain.
"If one respect to these fond men would show,
"Conceal the facts that give them pain to know;
"While all that pleases may be placed in view,
"And, if it be not, they will think it true."

The humble Patty dropp'd a silent tear,
And said, "Indeed, 't is best to be sincere."
James answer'd not—there could be no reply
To what he would not grant nor could deny;
But from that time he in the maiden saw
What he condemn'd; yet James was kept in awe;
He felt her virtue, but was sore afraid
For the frank blunders of the virtuous maid.

Meantime he daily to his Uncle read
The news, and to his favourite subjects led:
If closely press'd, be sometimes stay'd to dine,
Eat of one dish, and drank one glass of wine;
For James was crafty grown, and felt his way
To favour, step by step, and day by day;
He talk'd of business, till the Uncle prized
The lad's opinion, whom he once despised,
And, glad to see him thus his faults survive,
"This Boy," quoth he, "will keep our name alive.
"Women are weak, and Patty, though the best
"Of her weak sex, is woman like the rest:
"An idle husband will her money spend,
"And bring my hard-earn'd savings to an end."

Far as he dared, his Nephew this way led,
And told his tales of lasses rashly wed,
Told them as matters that he heard,—"He knew
"Not where," he said, "they might be false or true;
"One must confess that girls are apt to dote
"On the bright scarlet of a coxcomb's coat;
"And that with ease a woman they beguile
"With a fool's flattery, or a rascal's smile;
"But then," he added, fearing to displease,
"Our Patty never saw such men as these."

"True! but she may—some scoundrel may command
"The girl's whole store, if he can gain her hand;
"Her very goodness will itself deceive,
"And her weak virtue help her to believe;
"Yet she is kind; and, Nephew, go, and say
"I need her now—You 'll come another day."

In such discourses, while the maiden went
About her household, many an hour was spent,
Till James was sure that, when his Uncle died,
He should at least the property divide:
Nor long had he to wait—the fact was quickly tried.

The Uncle, now to his last bed confined,
To James and Patty his affairs resign'd:
The doctor took his final fee in hand,
The man of law received his last command;
The silent priest sat watching in his chair,
If he might wake the dying man to prayer,—
When the last groan was heard; then all was still,
And James indulged his musings—on the Will.

This in due time was read, and Patty saw
Her own dear Cousin made the heir-by-law.
Something indeed was hers, but yet she felt
As if her Uncle had not kindly dealt;
And, but that James was one whom she could trust,
She would have thought it cruel and unjust.
E'en as it was, it gave her some surprise,
And tears unbidden started in her eyes;
Yet she confess'd it was the same to her,
And it was likely men would men prefer.
Loath was the Niece to think her Uncle wrong;
And other thoughts engaged her—"Is it long
"That custom bids us tarry ere we wed,
"When a kind Uncle is so lately dead?
"At any rate," the maiden judged, "'t is he
"That first will speak—it does not rest with me."

James to the Will his every thought confined,
And found some parts that vex'd his sober mind.
He, getting much, to angry thoughts gave way,
For the poor pittance that he had to pay,
With Patty's larger claim. Save these alone,
The weeping heir beheld the whole his own;

Yet something painful in his mind would dwell,—
"It was not likely, but was possible:"—
No—Fortune lately was to James so kind,
He was determined not to think her blind:
"She saw his merit, and would never throw
"His prospects down by such malicious blow."

Patty, meanwhile, had quite enough betray'd
Of her own mind to make her James afraid
Of one so simply pure: his hardening heart
Inclined to anger,—he resolved to part;
Why marry Patty?—if he look'd around,
More advantageous matches might be found;
But though he might a richer wife command,
He first must break her hold upon his hand.

She with a spinster-friend retired a while,
"Not long," she said, and said it with a smile.
Not so had James determined:—He essay'd
To move suspicion in the gentle maid.
Words not succeeding, he design'd to pass
The spinsters window with some forward lass.
If in her heart so pure no pang was known,
At least he might affect it in his own.
There was a brother of her friend, and he,
Though poor and rude, might serve for jealousy.
If all should fail, he, though of schemes bereft,
Might leave her yet!—They fail'd, and she was left.

Poor Patty bore it with a woman's mind,
And with an angel's, sorrowing and resign'd.
Ere this in secret long she wept and pray'd,
Long tried to think her lover but delay'd
The union, once his hope, his prayer, his pride;—
She could in James as in herself confide:
Was he not bound by all that man can bind,
In love, in honour, to be just and kind?
Large was his debt, and, when their debts are large,
The ungrateful cancel what the just discharge;
Nor payment only in their pride refuse,
But first they wrong their friend, and then accuse.
Thus Patty finds her bosom's claims denied,
Her love insulted, and her right defied.
She urged it not; her claim the maid withdrew,
For maiden pride would not the wretch pursue:
She sigh'd to find him false, herself so good and true.

Now all his fears, at least the present, still—
He talk'd, good man! about his uncle's will:
"All unexpected," he declared,—"surprised
"Was he—and his good uncle ill-advised:
"He no such luck had look'd for, he was sure,
"Nor such deserved," he said, with look demure;
"He did not merit such exceeding love,
"But his, he meant, so help him God, to prove."
And he has proved it! all his cares and schemes
Have proved the exceeding love James bears to James.

But to proceed,—for we have yet the facts
That show how Justice looks on wicked acts;
For, though not always, she at times appears—
To wake in man her salutary fears.

James, restless grown—for no such mind can rest—
Would build a house that should his wealth attest;
In fact, he saw, in many a clouded face,
A certain token of his own disgrace;
And wish'd to overawe the murmurs of the place.

The finish'd building show'd the master's wealth,
And noisy workmen drank his Honour's health—
"His and his heirs"—and at the thoughtless word
A strange commotion in his bosom stirr'd.
"Heirs! said the idiots?"—and again that clause
In the strange Will corrected their applause.

Prophetic fears! for now reports arose
That spoil'd "his Honour's" comforts and repose.
A stout young Sailor, though in battle maim'd,
Arrived in port, and his possessions claim'd.
The Will he read: he stated his demand,
And his attorney grasp'd at house and land.
The Will provided—"If my son survive,
He shall inherit;" and lo! Jack's alive!
Yes! he was that lost lad, preserved by fate,
And now was bent on finding his estate.
But claim like this the angry James denied,
And to the law the sturdy heir applied.
James did what men when placed like him would do—
Avow'd his right, and fee'd his lawyer too:
The Will, indeed, provided for a son;
But was this Sailor youth the very one?

Ere Jack's strong proofs in all their strength were shown,
To gain a part James used a milder tone;
But the instructed tar would reign alone.

At last he reign'd: to James a large bequest
Was frankly dealt; the Seaman had the rest—
Save a like portion to the gentle Niece,
Who lived in comfort, and regain'd her peace.
In her neat room her talent she employ'd
With more true peace than ever James enjoy'd.
The young, the aged, in her praise agreed—
Meek in her manner, bounteous in her deed;
The very children their respect avow'd—
"'T was the good lady," they were told, and bow'd.

The merry Seaman much the maid approv'd,—
Nor that alone—he like a seaman loved;
Loved as a man who did not much complain,
Loved like a sailor, not a sighing swain;
Had heard of wooing maids, but knew not how—
"Lass, if you love me, prithee tell me now,"
Was his address—but this was nothing cold—
"Tell if you love me;" and she smiled and told.

He brought her presents, such as sailors buy
Glittering like gold, to please a maiden's eye,
All silk and silver, fringe and finery.
These she accepted in respect to him,
And thought but little of the missing limb.
Of this he told her, for he loved to tell
A warlike tale, and judged he told it well:—
"You mark me, love! the French were two to one,
"And so, you see, they were ashamed to run;

" We fought an hour; and then there came the shot
" That struck me here—a man must take his lot;—
" A minute after, and the Frenchman struck;
" One minute sooner had been better luck:
" But if you can a crippled cousin like,
" You ne'er shall see him for a trifle strike."

Patty, whose gentle heart was not so nice
As to reject the thought of loving twice,
Judged her new Cousin was by nature kind,
With no suspicions in his honest mind,
Such as our virtuous ladies now and then
Find strongly floating in the minds of men.
So they were married, and the lasses vow'd
That Patty's luck would make an angel proud:
" Not but that time would come when she must prove
" That men are men, no matter how they love:"—
And she has proved it; for she finds her man
As kind and true as when their loves began.

James is unhappy; not that he is poor,
But, having much, because he has no more;
Because a rival's pleasure gives him pain;
Because his vices work'd their way in vain;
And, more than these, because he sees the smile
Of a wrong'd woman pitying man so vile.

He sought an office, serves in the excise,
And every wish, but that for wealth, denies;
Wealth is the world to him, and he is worldly wise.
But disappointment in his face appears;
Care and vexation, sad regret and fears,
Have fix'd on him their fangs, and done the work of years.

Yet grows he wealthy in a strange degree,
And neighbours wonder how the fact can be:
He lives alone, contracts a sordid air,
And sees with sullen grief the cheerful pair;
Feels a keen pang, as he beholds the door
Where peace abides, and mutters,—" *I am poor!*"

TALE XXII.

[FAREWELL AND RETURN.]

PREACHING AND PRACTICE.

I.

P.—WHAT I have ask'd are questions that relate
To those once known, that I might learn their fate.
But there was One, whom though I scarcely knew,
Much do I wish to learn his fortunes too.
Yet what expect?—He was a rich man's Heir,
His conduct doubtful, but his prospects fair;
Thoughtless and brave, extravagant and gay,
Wild as the wind, and open as the day;
His freaks and follies were a thousand times
Brought full in view: I heard not of his crimes.
Like our Prince Hal, his company he chose
Among the lawless, of restraint the foes;
But though to their poor pleasures he could stoop,
He was not, rumour said, their victim-dupe.

His mother's Sister was a maiden prim,
Pious and poor, and much in debt to him.
This she repaid with volumes of reproof,
And sage advice, till he would cry " Enough!"

His father's Brother no such hints allow'd,—
Peevish and rich, and insolent and proud,
Of stern, strong spirit: him the Youth withstood;
At length, " Presume not (said he) on our blood:
" Treat with politeness him whom you advise,
" Nor think I fear your doting prophecies."
And fame has told of many an angry word,
When anger this, and that contempt had stirr'd.

" Boy! thou wilt beg thy bread, I plainly see."—
" Upbraid not, Uncle! till I beg of thee."

" Oh! thou wilt run to ruin and disgrace."—
" What! and so kind an Uncle in the place?"

" Nay, for I hold thee stranger to my blood."—
" Then must I treat thee as a stranger would:
" For if you throw the tie of blood aside,
" You must the roughness of your speech abide."

" What! to your father's Brother do you give
" A challenge?—Mercy! in what times we live!"

Now, I confess, the youth who could supply
Thus that poor Spinster, and could thus defy
This wealthy Uncle,—who could mix with them
Whom his strong sense and feeling must condemn,
And in their follies his amusement find,
Yet never lose the vigour of his mind,—
A youth like this, with much we must reprove,
Had something still to win esteem and love.
Perhaps he lives not; but he seem'd not made
To pass through life entirely in the shade.

F.—Suppose you saw him,—does your mind retain
So much that you would know the man again?
Yet hold in mind, he may have felt the press
Of grief or guilt, the withering of distress;
He now may show the stamp of woe and pain,
And nothing of his lively cast remain.

Survey these features—see if nothing there
May old impressions on your mind repair!
Is there not something in this shatter'd frame
Like to that—

P.—No! not like it, but the *same*;
That eye so brilliant, and that smile so gay,
Are lighted up, and sparkle, through decay.

But may I question? Will you that allow?
There was a difference, and there must be now;
And yet, permitted, I would gladly hear
What must have pass'd in many a troubled year.

F.—Then hear my tale; but I the price demand:
That understood, I too must understand
Thy wanderings through, or sufferings in the land;
And if our virtues cannot much produce,
Perhaps our errors may be found of use.

To all the wealth my Father's care laid by,
I added wings, and taught it how to fly.
To him that act had been of grievous sight,
But he survived not to behold the flight.
Strange doth it seem to grave and sober minds,
How the dear vice the simple votary blinds,
So that he goes to ruin smoothly on,
And scarcely feels he 's going, till he 's gone.

I had made over, in a lucky hour,
Funds for my Aunt, and placed beyond my power:
The rest was flown, I speak it with remorse,
And now a pistol seem'd a thing in course.

But, though its precepts I had not obey'd,
Thoughts of my Bible made me much afraid
Of such rebellion; and though not content,
I must live on when life's supports were spent:
Nay, I must eat, and of my frugal Aunt
Must grateful take what gracious she would grant;
And true, she granted, but with much discourse,—
Oh! with what words did she her sense enforce!
Great was her wonder, in my need that I
Should on the prop myself had raised rely—
I, who provided for her in my care,
"Must be assured how little she could spare!"

I stood confounded, and with angry tone,
With rage and grief, that blended oath and groan,
I fled her presence—yet I saw her air
Of resignation, and I heard her prayer:
"Now Heaven," she utter'd, "make his burden light!"—
And I, in parting, cried, "Thou hypocrite!"

But I was wrong—she might have meant to pray;
Though not to give her soul—her cash—away.

Of course, my uncle would the spendthrift shun;
So friends on earth I now could reckon none.

One morn I rambled, thinking of the past,
For in the country—Did you ever fast
Through a long summer's day? or, sturdy, go
To pluck the crab, the bramble, and the sloe,
The hyp, the cornel, and the beech, the food
And the wild solace of the gipsy brood?
To pick the cress, embrown'd by summer sun,
From the dry bed where streams no longer run?
Have you, like schoolboy, mingling play and toil,
Dug for the ground-nut, and enjoy'd the spoil?
Or chafed with feverish hand the ripening wheat,
Resolved to fast, and yet compell'd to eat?

Say, did you this, and drink the crystal spring,
And think yourself an abdicated king,
Driv'n from your state by a rebellious race?
And, in your pride contending with disgrace,
Could you your hunger in your anger lose,
And call the ills you bear the ways you choose?

Thus on myself depending, I began
To feel the pride of a neglected man:
Not yet correct, but still I could command
Unshaken nerves and a determined hand.

"Lo! men at work! I said, "and I, a man,
"Can work! I feel it is my pride, I can."
This said, I wander'd on, and join'd the poor,
Assumed a labourer's dress, and was no more
Than labour made. Upon the road I broke
Stones for my bread, and startled at the stroke;
But every day the labour seem'd more light,
And sounder, sweeter still, the sleep of every night.

"Thus will I live," I cried, nor more return
"To herd with men, whose love and hate I spurn.
"All creatures toil; the beast, if tamed or free,
"Must toil for daily sustenance like me;
"The feather'd people hunt as well as sing,
"And catch their flying food upon the wing.
"The fish, the insect, all who live, employ
"Their powers to keep on life, or to enjoy,
"Their life the enjoyment; thus will I proceed,
"A man from man's detested favours freed."

Thus was I reasoning, when at length there came
A gift, a present, but without a name.
"That Spinster-witch—has she, then, found a way
"To cure her conscience, and her nephew pay,
"And sends her pittance? Well, and let it buy
"What sweetens labour: need I this deny?
"I thank her not: it is as if I found
"The fairy-gift upon this stony ground."

Still I wrought on; again occurr'd the day,
And then the same addition to my pay.

Then, lo! another Friend, if not the same,—
For that I knew not—with a message came:
"Canst keep accounts?" the man was pleased to ask—
"I could not cash!—but that the harder task."
"Yet try," he said; and I was quickly brought
To Lawyer Snell, and in his office taught:
Not much my pay, but my desires were less,
And I for evil days reserved th' excess.

Such day occurr'd not: quickly came there one,
When I was told my present work was done:
My Friend then brought me to a building large,
And gave far weightier business to my charge.
There I was told I had accounts to keep
Of those vast Works where wonders never sleep,
Where spindles, bobbins, rovings, threads, and pins,
Made up the complex mass that ever spins.

There, at my desk, in my six feet of room,
I noted every power of every loom;

Sounds of all kinds I heard from mortal lungs—
Eternal battle of unwearied tongues,
The jar of men and women, girls and boys,
And the huge Babel's own dull whirring grinding noise.

My care was mark'd, and I had soon in charge
Important matters, and my pay was large.
I at my fortune marvell'd; it was strange,
And so the outward and the inward change,
Till to the Power who "gives and takes away"
I turn'd in praise, and taught my soul to pray.

Another came! "I come," he said, "to show
"Your unknown Friend—have you a wish to know?"
Much I desired, and forth we rode, and found
My Uncle dying, but his judgment sound.
The good old man, whom I abused, had been
The guardian power, directing but unseen;
And thus the wild but grateful boy he led
To take new motives at his dying bed.

The rest you judge—I now have all I need—
And now the tale you promised!—Come, proceed.

P.—'T is due, I own, but yet in mercy spare:
Alas! no Uncle was my guide—my care
Was all my own; no guardian took a share.
I, like Columbus, for a world unknown—
'T was no great effort—sacrificed my own—
My own sad world, where I had never seen
The earth productive, or the sky serene.

But this is past—and I at length am come
To see what changes have been wrought at home.
Happy in this, that I can set me down
At worst a stranger in my native town.

F.—Then be it so! but mean you not to show
How time has pass'd? for we expect to know:
And if you tell not, know you we shall trace
Your movements for ourselves from place to place.
Your wants, your wishes, all you 've sought or seen,
Shall be the food for our remark and spleen.
So, warn'd in time, the real page unfold,
And let the Truth, before the Lie, be told.

P.—This might be done; but wonders I have none,
All my adventures are of Self alone.

F.—What then? I grant you, if your way was clear,
All smooth and right—we 've no desire to hear;
But if you 've lewd and wicked things to tell,
Low passions, cruel deeds, nay crimes—'tis well:
Who would not listen?——
P.—Hark! I hear the bell.
It calls to dinner with inviting sound,
For now we know where dinners may be found,
And can behold and share the glad repast,
Without a dread that we behold our last.

F.—Come then, shy friend, let doleful subjects cease,
And thank our God that we can dine in peace.

APPENDIX.

No. I. INEBRIETY; A POEM.

PUBLISHED AT IPSWICH, IN 1775.[1]

THE mighty spirit, and its power, which stains[2]
The bloodless cheek, and vivifies the brains,
I sing. Say, ye, its fiery vot'ries true,
The jovial curate, and the shrill-tongued shrew;
Ye, in the floods of limpid poison nurst,
Where bowl the second charms like bowl the first;
Say how, and why, the sparkling ill is shed,
The heart which hardens, and which rules the head.
When winter stern his gloomy front uprears,
A sable void the barren earth appears;
The meads no more their former verdure boast,
Fast bound their streams, and all their beauty lost;
The herds, the flocks, in icy garments mourn,
And wildly murmur for the spring's return;
From snow-topp'd hills the whirlwinds keenly blow,
Howl through the woods, and pierce the vales below;
Through the sharp air a flaky torrent flies,
Mocks the slow sight, and hides the gloomy skies;
The fleecy clouds their chilly bosoms bare,
And shed their substance on the floating air;
The floating air their downy substance glides
Through springing waters, and prevents their tides;
Seizes the rolling waves, and, as a god,
Charms their swift race, and stops the refluent flood;
The opening valves, which fill the venal road,
Then scarcely urge along the sanguine flood;
The labouring pulse a slower motion rules,
The tendons stiffen, and the spirit cools;
Each asks the aid of Nature's sister, Art,
To cheer the senses, and to warm the heart.
The gentle fair or nervous tea relies,
Whilst gay good-nature sparkles in her eyes;
An inoffensive scandal fluttering round,
Too rough to tickle, and too light to wound;
Champagne the courtier drinks, the spleen to chase,
The colonel burgundy, and port his grace;
Turtle and 'rrac the city rulers charm,
Ale and content the labouring peasants warm:
O'er the dull embers, happy Colin sits,
Colin, the prince of joke, and rural wits;
Whilst the wind whistles through the hollow panes,
He drinks, nor of the rude assault complains;
And tells the tale, from sire to son retold,
Of spirits vanishing near hidden gold;
Of moon-clad imps that tremble by the dew,
Who skim the air, or glide o'er waters blue:
The throng invisible that, doubtless, float
By mouldering tombs, and o'er the stagnant moat:
Fays dimly glancing on the russet plain,
And all the dreadful nothing of the green.
Peace be to such, the happiest and the best,
Who with the forms of fancy urge their jest;
Who wage no war with an avenger's rod,
Nor in the pride of reason curse their God.
When in the vaulted arch Lucina gleams,
And gaily dances o'er the azure streams;
On silent ether when a trembling sound
Reverberates, and wildly floats around,
Breaking through trackless space upon the ear,
Conclude the Bacchanalian rustic near:
O'er hills and vales the jovial savage reels,
Fire in his head and frenzy at his heels;
From paths direct the bending hero swerves,
And shapes his way in ill-proportioned curves.
Now safe arrived, his sleeping rib he calls,
And madly thunders on the muddy walls;
The well-known sounds an equal fury move,
For rage meets rage, as love enkindles love:
In vain the waken'd infant's accents shrill,
The humble regions of the cottage fill;
In vain the cricket chirps the mansion through,
'T is war, and blood, and battle must ensue.
As when, on humble stage, him Satan hight
Defies the brazen hero to the fight:
From twanging strokes what dire misfortunes rise,
What fate to maple arms and glassen eyes!
Here lies a leg of elm, and there a stroke
From ashen neck has whirl'd a head of oak.
So drops from either power, with vengeance big,
A remnant night-cap and an old cut wig;

[1] For particulars respecting this juvenile production of Mr. Crabbe, see *ante*, p. 7. In the following reprint some couplets are omitted, but nothing has been altered.

[2] "The mighty Mother, and her son, who brings
The Smithfield muses to the ear of kings," &c.
POPE'S *Dunciad.*

Titles unmusical retorted round,
On either ear with leaden vengeance sound;
Till equal valour, equal wounds create,
And drowsy peace concludes the fell debate;
Sleep in her woollen mantle wraps the pair,
And sheds her poppies on the ambient air;
Intoxication flies, as fury fled,
On rooky pinions quits the aching head;
Returning reason cools the fiery blood,
And drives from memory's seat the rosy god.
Yet still he holds o'er some his maddening rule,
Still sways his sceptre, and still knows his fool;
Witness the livid lip, and fiery front,
With many a smarting trophy placed upon't;
The hollow eye, which plays in misty springs,
And the hoarse voice, which rough and broken rings;
These are his triumphs, and o'er these he reigns,
The blinking deity of reeling brains.
See Inebriety! her wand she waves,
And lo! her pale, and lo! her purple slaves!
Sots in embroidery, and sots in crape,
Of every order, station, rank, and shape:
The king, who nods upon his rattle throne;
The staggering peer, to midnight revel prone;
The slow-tongued bishop, and the deacon sly,
The humble pensioner, and gownsman dry;
The proud, the mean, the selfish, and the great,
Swell the dull throng, and stagger into state.
Lo! proud Flaminius at the splendid board,
The easy chaplain of an atheist lord,
Quaffs the bright juice, with all the gust of sense,
And clouds his brain in torpid elegance;
In china vases, see! the sparkling ill,
From gay decanters view the rosy rill;
The neat-carved pipes in silver settle laid,
The screw by mathematic cunning made:
Oh, happy priest! whose God, like Egypt's, lies
At once the deity and sacrifice.
But is Flaminius then the man alone
To whom the joys of swimming brains are known?
Lo! the poor toper whose untutor'd sense,
Sees bliss in ale, and can with wine dispense;[3]
Whose head proud fancy never taught to steer
Beyond the muddy ecstasies of beer;
But simple nature can her longing quench,
Behind the settle's curve, or humbler bench:
Some kitchen fire diffusing warmth around,
The semi-globe by hieroglyphics crown'd;
Where canvas purse displays the brass enroll'd,
Nor waiters rave, nor landlords thirst for gold;
Ale and content his fancy's bounds confine,
He asks no limpid punch, no rosy wine;
But sees, admitted to an equal share,
Each faithful swain the heady potion bear:
Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of taste,
Weigh gout and gravel against ale and rest;
Call vulgar *palates* what thou judgest so;
Say beer is heavy, windy, cold, and slow;
Laugh at poor sots with insolent pretence,
Yet cry, when tortured, where is Providence?
In various forms the madd'ning spirit moves,
This drinks and fights, another drinks and loves.

A bastard zeal, of different kinds it shows,
And now with rage, and now religion glows:
The frantic soul bright reason's path defies,
Now creeps on earth, now triumphs in the skies;
Swims in the seas of error, and explores,
Through midnight mists, the fluctuating shores;
From wave to wave in rocky channel glides,
And sinks in woe, or on presumption slides;
In pride exalted, or by shame deprest,
An angel-devil, or a human-beast.
Some rage in all the strength of folly mad;
Some love stupidity, in silence clad,
Are never quarrelsome, are never gay,
But sleep, and groan, and drink the night away;
Old Torpio nods, and as the laugh goes round,
Grunts through the nasal duct, and joins the sound.
Then sleeps again, and, as the liquors pass,
Wakes at the friendly jog, and takes his glass:
Alike to him who stands, or reels, or moves,
The elbow chair, good wine, and sleep he loves;
Nor cares of state disturb his easy head,
By grosser fumes and calmer follies fed;
Nor thoughts of when, or where, or how to come,
The canvass general, or the general doom;
Extremes ne'er reach'd one passion of his soul,
A villain tame, and an unmettled fool;
To half his vices he has but pretence,
For they usurp the place of common sense;
To half his little merits has no claim,
For very idolence has raised his name;
Happy in this, that, under Satan's sway,
His passions tremble, but will not obey.
The vicar at the table's front presides,
Whose presence a monastic life derides;
The reverend wig, in sideway order placed,
The reverend band, by rubric stains disgraced,
The leering eye, in wayward circles roll'd,
Mark him the pastor of a jovial fold,
Whose various texts excite a loud applause,
Favouring the bottle, and the good old cause.
See! the dull smile which fearfully appears,
When gross indecency her front uprears,
The joy conceal'd, the fiercer burns within,
As masks afford the keenest gust to sin;
Imagination helps the reverend sire,
And spreads the sails of sub-divine desire;
But when the gay immoral joke goes round,
When shame and all her blushing train are drown'd,
Rather than hear his God blasphemed, he takes
The last loved glass, and then the board forsakes.
Not that religion prompts the sober thought,
But slavish custom has the practice taught;
Besides, this zealous son of warm devotion
Has a true Levite bias for promotion.
Vicars must with discretion go astray,
Whilst bishops may be damn'd the nearest way:
So puny robbers individuals kill,
When hector-heroes murder as they will.
Good honest Curio elbows the divine,
And strives a social sinner how to shine;
The dull quaint tale is his, the lengthen'd tale,
That Wilton farmers give you with their ale,
How midnight ghosts o'er vaults terrific pass,
Dance o'er the grave, and slide along the grass;
Or how pale Cicely within the wood
Call'd Satan forth and bargain'd with her blood:

[3] "Lo the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind,
Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind," &c.
POPE'S *Essay on Man*.

These, honest Curio, are thine, and these
Are the dull treasures of a brain at peace;
No wit intoxicates thy gentle skull,
Of heavy, native, unwrought folly full:
Bowl upon bowl in vain exert their force,
The breathing spirit takes a downward course,
Or vainly soaring upwards to the head,
Meets an impenetrable fence of lead.
Hast thou, oh reader! search'd o'er gentle Gay,
Where various animals their powers display?
In one strange group a chattering race are hurl'd,
Led by the monkey who had seen the world.
Like him Fabricio steals from guardian's side,
Swims not in pleasure's stream, but sips the tide:
He hates the bottle, yet but thinks it right
To boast next day the honours of the night;
None like your coward can describe a fight.
See him as down the sparkling potion goes,
Labour to grin away the horrid dose;
In joy-feign'd gaze his misty eyeballs float,
Th' uncivil spirit gurgling at his throat;
So looks dim Titan through a wintry scene,
And faintly cheers the woe-foreboding swain.
Timon, long practised in the school of art,
Has lost each finer feeling of the heart;
Triumphs o'er shame, and, with delusive wiles
Laughs at the idiot he himself beguiles:
So matrons past the awe of censure's tongue,
Deride the blushes of the fair and young.
Few with more fire on every subject spoke,
But chief he loved the gay immoral joke;
The words most sacred, stole from holy writ,
He gave a newer form, and call'd them wit.
Vice never had a more sincere ally,
So bold no sinner, yet no saint so sly;
Learn'd, but not wise, and without virtue brave,
A gay, deluding philosophic knave.
When Bacchus' joys his airy fancy fire,
They stir a new, but still a false desire;
And to the comfort of each untaught fool,
Horace in English vindicates the bowl.
"The man," says Timon, "who is drunk is blest,[4]
"No fears disturb, no cares destroy his rest;
"In thoughtless joy he reels away his life,
"Nor dreads that worst of ills, a noisy wife."
"Oh! place me, Jove, where none but women come,
"And thunders worse than thine afflict the room,
"Where one eternal nothing flutters round,
"And senseless titt'ring sense of mirth confound;
"Or lead me bound to garret, Babel-high,
"Where frantic poet rolls his crazy eye,
"Tiring the ear with oft-repeated chimes,
"And smiling at the never-ending rhymes:
"E'en here, or there, I 'll be as blest as Jove,
"Give me tobacco, and the wine I love."
Applause from hands the dying accents break,
Of stagg'ring sots who vainly try to speak;
From Milo, him who hangs upon each word,
And in loud praises splits the tortured board,
Collects each sentence, ere it 's better known,
And makes the mutilated joke his own,
At weekly club to flourish, where he rules,
The glorious president of grosser fools.
But cease, my Muse! of those or these enough,
The fools who listen, and the knaves who scoff;
The jest profane, that mocks th' offended God
Defies his power, and sets at nought his rod;
The empty laugh, discretion's vainest foe,
From fool to fool re-echoed to and fro;
The sly indecency, that slowly springs
From barren wit, and halts on trembling wings:
Enough of these, and all the charms of wine,
Be sober joys and social evenings mine;
Where peace and reason, unsoil'd mirth improve
The powers of friendship and the joys of love;
Where thought meets thought ere words its form array,
And all is sacred, elegant, and gay:
Such pleasure leaves no sorrow on the mind,
Too great to fall, to sicken too refined;
Too soft for noise, and too sublime for art,
The social solace of the feeling heart,
For sloth too rapid, and for wit too high,
'T is VIRTUE'S pleasure, and can never die!

[4] "Integer vitæ, scelerisque puris
Non eget." &c. &c. HORACE.

No. II. FRAGMENTS OF VERSE

FROM

MR. CRABBE'S EARLY NOTE-BOOKS.

YE GENTLE GALES.

Woodbridge, 1776.

YE gentle Gales, that softly move,
Go whisper to the Fair I love;
Tell her I languish and adore,
And pity in return implore.

But if she 's cold to my request,
Ye louder Winds, proclaim the rest—
My sighs, my tears, my griefs proclaim,
And speak in strongest notes my flame.

Still if she rests in mute disdain,
And thinks I feel a common pain—
Wing'd with my woes, ye Tempests, fly,
And tell the haughty Fair I die.

MIRA.

Aldborough, 1777.

A WANTON chaos in my breast raged high,
A wanton transport darted in mine eye;
False pleasure urged, and ev'ry eager care,
That swell the soul to guilt and to despair.
My Mira came! be ever blest the hour,
That drew my thoughts half way from folly's power.
She first my soul with loftier notions fired;
I saw their truth, and as I saw admired;
With greater force returning reason moved,
And as returning reason urged, I loved;
Till pain, reflection, hope, and love allied
My bliss precarious to a surer guide—
To Him who gives pain, reason, hope, and love,
Each for that end that angels must approve.
One beam of light He gave my mind to see,
And gave that light, my heavenly fair, by thee;
That beam shall raise my thoughts, and mend my strain,
Nor shall my vows, nor prayers, nor verse be vain.

HYMN.

Beccles, 1778.

OH, THOU! who taught my infant eye
To pierce the air, and view the sky,
To see my God in earth and seas,
To hear him in the vernal breeze,
To know him midnight thoughts among,
O guide my soul, and aid my song.

Spirit of Light! do thou impart
Majestic truths, and teach my heart;
Teach me to know how weak I am;
How vain my powers, how poor my frame;
Teach me celestial paths untrod—
The ways of glory and of God.

No more let me, in vain surprise,
To heathen art give up my eyes—
To piles laborious science rear'd
For heroes brave, or tyrants fear'd;
But quit Philosophy, and see
The Fountain of her works in Thee.

Fond man! yon glassy mirror eye—
Go, pierce the flood, and there descry
The miracles that float between
The rainy leaves of wat'ry green;
Old Ocean's hoary treasures scan;
See nations swimming round a span.

Then wilt thou say—and rear no more
Thy monuments in mystic lore—
My God! I quit my vain design,
And drop my work to gaze on Thine:
Henceforth I 'll frame myself to be,
Oh, Lord! a monument of Thee.

THE WISH.

Aldborough, 1778.

GIVE me, ye Powers that rule in gentle hearts!
The full design, complete in all its parts,
Th' enthusiastic glow, that swells the soul—
When swell'd too much, the judgment to control—
The happy ear that feels the flowing force
Of the smooth line's uninterrupted course;
Give me, oh give! if not in vain the prayer,
That sacred wealth, poetic worth to share—
Be it my boast to please and to improve,
To warm the soul to virtue and to love;
To paint the passions, and to teach mankind
Our greatest pleasures are the most refined;
The cheerful tale with fancy to rehearse,
And gild the moral with the charm of verse.

THE COMPARISON.

Parham, 1778.

FRIENDSHIP is like the gold refined,
And all may weigh its worth;
Love like the ore, brought undesign'd
In virgin beauty forth.

Friendship may pass from age to age,
And yet remain the same;
Love must in many a toil engage,
And melt in lambent flame.

GOLDSMITH TO THE AUTHOR.

"Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum."

Aldborough, 1778.

YOU 'RE in love with the Muses! Well, grant it be true,
When, good Sir, were the Muses enamour'd of you?
Read first,—if my lectures your fancy delight,—
Your taste is diseased:—can your cure be to *write*?

You suppose you 're a genius, that ought to engage
The attention of wits, and the smiles of the age:
Would the wits of the age their opinion make known,
Why—every man thinks just the same of his own.

You imagine that Pope—but yourself you beguile—
Would have wrote the same things, had he chose the same style.
Delude not yourself with so fruitless a hope,—
Had he chose the same style, he had never been Pope.

You think of *my* Muse with a friendly regard,
And rejoice in her author's esteem and reward;
But let not his glory your spirits elate,
When pleased with his honours, remember his fate.

FRAGMENT.

"Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

Aldborough, 1778.

PROUD, little Man, opinion's slave,
Error's fond child, too duteous to be free,
Say, from the cradle to the grave,
Is not the earth thou tread'st too grand for thee?

This globe that turns thee, on her agile wheel
Moves by deep springs, which thou canst never feel:
Her day and night, her centre and her sun,
Untraced by thee, their annual courses run.
A busy fly, thou sharest the march divine,
And flattering fancy calls the motion thine:
Untaught how soon some hanging-grave may burst,
And join thy flimsy substance to the dust.

THE RESURRECTION.

Aldborough, 1778.

The wintry winds have ceased to blow,
And trembling leaves appear;
And fairest flowers succeed the snow,
And hail the infant year.

So, when the world and all its woes
Are vanish'd far away,
Fair scenes and wonderful repose
Shall bless the new-born day,—

When, from the confines of the grave,
The body too shall rise;
No more precarious passion's slave,
Nor error's sacrifice.

'T is but a sleep—and Sion's king
Will call the many dead:
'T is but a sleep—and then we sing,
O'er dreams of sorrow fled.

Yes!—wintry winds have ceased to blow,
And trembling leaves appear,
And nature has her types to show
Throughout the varying year.

MY BIRTH-DAY.

Aldborough, Dec. 24, 1778.

Through a dull tract of woe, of dread,
The toiling year has pass'd and fled:
And, lo! in sad and pensive strain,
I sing my birth-day date again.

Trembling and poor, I saw the light,
New waking from unconscious night:
Trembling and poor, I still remain
To meet unconscious night again.

Time in my pathway strews few flowers,
To cheer or cheat the weary hours;
And those few strangers, dear indeed,
Are choked, are check'd, by *many a weed*.

TO ELIZA.

Beccles, 1779.

The Hebrew king, with spleen possest,
By David's harp was soothed to rest;
Yet, when the magic song was o'er,
The soft delusion charm'd no more:
The former fury fired the brain,
And every care return'd again.

But had he known Eliza's skill
To bless the sense and bind the will,
To bid the gloom of care retire,
And fan the flame of fond desire,
Remembrance then had kept the strain,
And not a care return'd again.

LIFE.

Aldborough, 1779.

Think ye the joys that fill our early day,
Are the poor prelude to some full repast?
Think you they *promise*?—ah! believe they *pay*;
The purest ever, they are oft the last.
The jovial swain that yokes the morning team,
And all the verdure of the field enjoys,
See him, how languid! when the noontide beam
Plays on his brow, and all his force destroys.
So 't is with us, when, love and pleasure fled,
We at the summit of our hill arrive:
Lo! the gay lights of Youth are past—are dead,
But what still deepening clouds of Care survive!

THE SACRAMENT.

Aldborough, 1779.

O! sacred gift of God to man,
A faith that looks above,
And sees the deep amazing plan
Of sanctifying love.

Thou dear and yet tremendous God,
Whose glory pride reviles;
How did'st thou change thy awful rod
To pard'ning grace and smiles!

Shut up with sin, with shame, below,
I trust, this bondage past,
A great, a glorious change to know,
And to be bless'd at last.

I *do* believe, that, God of light!
Thou didst to earth descend,
With Satan and with Sin to fight—
Our great, our only friend.

I *know* thou did'st ordain for me,
Thy creature, bread and wine;
The depth of grace I cannot see,
But worship the design.

NIGHT.

Aldborough, 1779.

The sober stillness of the night,
That fills the silent air,
And all that breathes along the shore,
Invite to solemn prayer.

Vouchsafe to me that spirit, Lord!
Which points the sacred way,
And let thy creatures here below
Instruct me how to pray.

FRAGMENT, WRITTEN AT MIDNIGHT.

Aldborough, 1779.

On, great Apollo! by whose equal aid
The verse is written, and the med'cine made;
Shall thus a boaster, with his fourfold powers,
In triumph scorn this sacred art of ours?
Insulting quack! on thy sad business go,
And land the stranger on this world of woe.
Still I pass on, and now before me find
The restless ocean, emblem of my mind;
There wave on wave, here thought on thought succeeds,
Their produce idle works, and idle weeds:
Dark is the prospect o'er the rolling sea,
But not more dark than my sad views to me;
Yet from the rising moon the light beams dance
In troubled splendour o'er the wide expanse;
So on my soul, whom cares and troubles fright,
The Muse pours comfort in a flood of light.—
Shine out, fair flood! until the day-star flings
His brighter rays on all sublunar things.
"Why in such hast? by all the powers of wit,
I have against thee neither bond nor writ;
If thou 'rt a poet, now indulge the flight
Of thy fine fancy in this dubious light;
Cold, gloom, and silence shall assist thy rhyme,
And all things meet to form the true sublime."—
"Shall I, preserver deem'd around the place,
With abject rhymes a doctor's name disgrace?
Nor doctor solely, in the healing art
I 'm all in all, and all in every part;
Wise Scotland's boast let that diploma be
Which gave me right to claim the golden fee:
Praise, then, I claim, to skilful surgeon due,
For mine th' advice and operation too;
And, fearing all the vile compounding tribe,
I make myself the med'cines I prescribe;
Mine, too, the chemic art; and not a drop
Goes to my patients from a vulgar shop.
But chief my fame and fortune I command
From the rare skill of this obstetric hand:
This our chaste dames and prudent wives allow,
With her who calls me from thy wonder now."

TIME.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, FEBRUARY, 1780.

"The clock struck one! we take no thought of Time,"
Wrapt up in night, and *meditating* rhyme:
All big with vision, we despise the powers
That vulgar beings link to days and hours;
Those vile, mechanic things, that rule our hearts,
And cut our lives in momentary parts.
"That speech of Time was Wisdom's gift," said Young:
Ah, Doctor! better Time would hold his tongue:
What serves the clock? "To warn the careless crew
How much in little space they have to do;
To bid the busy world resign their breath,
And beat each moment a soft call for death—
To give it, then, a tongue, was wise in man."
Support the assertion, Doctor, if you can:
It tells the ruffian when his comrades wait;
It calls the duns to crowd my hapless gate;
It tells my heart the paralysing tale,
Of hours to come, when Misery must prevail.

THE CHOICE.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, FEBRUARY, 1780.

What vulgar title thus salutes the eye,—
The schoolboy's first attempt at poesy?
The long-worn theme of every humbler Muse,
For wits to scorn and nurses to peruse;
The dull description of a scribbler's brain,
And sigh'd-for wealth, for which he sighs in vain;
A glowing chart of fairy-land estate,
Romantic scenes, and visions out of date,
Clear skies, clear streams, soft banks, and sober bowers,
Deer, whimpering brooks, and wind-perfuming flowers?

Not thus! too long have I in fancy wove
My slender webs of wealth, and peace, and love;
Have dream'd of plenty, in the midst of want,
And sought, by Hope, what Hope can never grant;
Been fool'd by wishes, and still wish'd again,
And loved the flattery, while I knew it vain!
"Gain by the Muse!"—alas! thou might'st as soon
Pluck gain (as Percy honour) from the moon;
As soon grow rich by ministerial nods,
As soon divine by dreaming of the gods,
As soon succeed by telling ladies truth,
Or preaching moral documents to youth:
To as much purpose, mortal! thy desires
As Tully's flourishes to country squires;
As simple truth within St. James's state,
Or the soft lute in shrill-tongued Billingsgate.
"Gain by the Muse!" alas, preposterous hope!
Who ever gained by poetry—but Pope?
And what art thou? No St. John takes thy part;
No potent Dean commends thy head or heart!
What gain'st thou but the praises of the poor?
They bribe no milkman to thy lofty door,
They wipe no scrawl from thy increasing score.
What did the Muse, or Fame, for Dryden, say?
What for poor Butler? what for honest Gay?
For Thomson, what? or what to Savage give?
Or how did Johnson—how did Otway live?
Like thee! dependent on to-morrow's good,
Their thin revenue never understood;
Like thee, elate, at what thou canst not know;
Like thee, repining at each puny blow;
Like thee they lived, each dream of Hope to mock,
Upon their wits—but with a larger stock.
No, if for food thy unambitious pray'r,
With supple acts to supple minds repair;
Learn of the base in soft grimace to deal,
And deck thee with the livery genteel;
Or trim the wherry, or the flail invite,
Draw teeth, or any viler thing but write.

Writers, whom once th' astonish'd vulgar saw,
Give nations language, and great cities law;
Whom gods, they said—and surely gods—inspired,
Whom emp'rors honour'd, and the world admired—
Now common grown, they awe mankind no more,
But vassals are, who judges were before:
Blockheads on wits their little talents waste,
As files gnaw metal that they cannot taste;
Though still some good the trial may produce,
To shape the useful to a nobler use.
Some few of these, a statue and a stone
Has Fame decreed—but deals out bread to none.
Unhappy art! decreed thine owner's curse,
Vile diagnostic of consumptive purse:
Members by bribes, and ministers by lies,
Gamesters by luck, by courage soldiers rise:
Beaux by the outside of their heads may win,
And wily sergeants by the craft within:
Who but the race, by Fancy's demon led,
Starve by the means they use to gain their bread?
Oft have I read, and, reading, mourn'd the fate
Of garret-bard, and his unpitied mate;
Of children stinted in their daily meal!—
The joke of wealthier wits, who could not feel;
Portentous spoke that pity in my breast!
And pleaded self—who ever pleads the best:
No! thank my stars, my misery's all my own,—
To friends—to family—to foes unknown:
Who hates my verse, and damns the mean design,
Shall wound no peace—shall grieve no heart but mine.
One trial past, let sober Reason speak:
Here shall we rest, or shall we further seek?
Rest here, if our relenting stars ordain
A placid harbour from the stormy main:
Or, that denied, the fond remembrance weep,
And sink, forgotten, in the mighty deep.

No. III. THE CANDIDATE;

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO THE AUTHORS OF THE MONTHLY REVIEW.[1]

AN INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS OF THE AUTHOR TO HIS POEMS.

Multa quidem nobis facimus mala sæpe poetæ,
(Ut vineta egomet cædam mea) cum tibi librum
Sollicito damus, aut fesso, &c. HOR. Lib. ii. Ep. 1.

Ye idler things, that soothed my hours of care,
Where would ye wander, triflers, tell me where?
As maids neglected, do ye fondly dote,
On the fair type, or the embroider'd coat;
Detest my modest shelf, and long to fly
Where princely POPES and mighty MILTONS lie?
Taught but to sing, and that in simple style,
Of Lycia's lip, and Musidora's smile;—
Go then! and taste a yet unfelt distress,
The fear that guards the captivating press;
Whose maddening region should ye once explore,
No refuge yields my tongueless mansion more.
But thus ye 'll grieve, Ambition's plumage stript,
"Ah, would to Heaven, we 'd died in manuscript!"
Your unsoil'd page each yawning wit shall flee,
—For few will read, and none admire like me.—
Its place, where spiders silent bards enrobe,
Squeezed betwixt Cibber's Odes and Blackmore's Job;
Where froth and mud, that varnish and deform,
Feed the lean critic and the fattening worm;
Then sent disgraced—the unpaid printer's bane—
To mad Moorfields, or sober Chancery Lane,
On dirty stalls I see your hopes expire,
Vex'd by the grin of your unheeded sire,
Who half reluctant has his care resign'd,
Like a teased parent, and is rashly kind.

Yet rush not all, but let some scout go forth,
View the strange land, and tell us of its worth;
And should he there barbarian usage meet,
The patriot scrap shall warn us to retreat.

And thou, the first of thy eccentric race,
A forward imp, go, search the dangerous place,
Where Fame's eternal blossoms tempt each bard,
Though dragon-wits there keep eternal guard;
Hope not unhurt the golden spoil to seize,
The Muses yield, as the Hesperides;
Who bribes the guardian, all his labour's done,
For every maid is willing to be won.

Before the lords of verse a suppliant stand,
And beg our passage through the fairy land:
Beg more—to search for sweets each blooming field,
And crop the blossoms woods and valleys yield,
To snatch the tints that beam on Fancy's bow;
And feel the fires on Genius' wings that glow;
Praise without meanness, without flattery stoop,
Soothe without fear, and without trembling, hope.

[1] [For particulars respecting the original edition of this Poem, see *antè*, p. 15.]

TO THE READER.

THE following Poem being itself of an introductory nature, its author supposes it can require but little preface.

It is published with a view of obtaining the opinion of the candid and judicious reader on the merits of the writer as a poet; very few, he apprehends, being in such cases sufficiently impartial to decide for themselves.

It is addressed to the Authors of the Monthly Review, as to critics of acknowledged merit; an acquaintance with whose labours has afforded the writer of this Epistle a reason for directing it to them in particular, and, he presumes, will yield to others a just and sufficient plea for the preference.

Familiar with disappointment, he shall not be much surprised to find he has mistaken his talent. However, if not egregiously the dupe of his vanity, he promises to his readers some entertainment, and is assured that however little in the ensuing Poem is worthy of applause, there is yet less that merits contempt.

TO THE AUTHORS OF THE MONTHLY REVIEW.

THE pious pilot, whom the Gods provide,
Through the rough seas the shatter'd bark to guide,
Trusts not alone his knowledge of the deep,
Its rocks that threaten, and its sands that sleep;
But whilst with nicest skill he steers his way,
The guardian Tritons hear their favourite pray.
Hence borne his vows to Neptune's coral dome,
The God relents, and shuts each gulfy tomb.

Thus as on fatal floods to fame I steer,
I dread the storm that ever rattles here,
Nor think enough, that long my yielding soul
Has felt the Muse's soft but strong control,
Nor think enough that manly strength and ease,
Such as have pleased a friend, will strangers please;
But, suppliant, to the critic's throne I bow,
Here burn my incense, and here pay my vow;
That censure hush'd, may every blast give o'er,
And the lash'd coxcomb hiss contempt no more.
And ye, whom authors dread or dare in vain,
Affecting modest hopes, or poor disdain,
Receive a bard, who, neither mad nor mean,
Despises each extreme, and sails between;
Who fears; but has, amid his fears confess'd,
The conscious virtue of a Muse oppress'd;
A Muse in changing times and stations nursed,
By nature honour'd, and by fortune cursed.

No servile strain of abject hope she brings,
Nor soars presumptuous, with unwearied wings,
But, pruned for flight—the future all her care—
Would know her strength, and, if not strong, forbear.

The supple slave to regal pomp bows down,
Prostrate to power, and cringing to a crown;
The bolder villain spurns a decent awe,
Tramples on rule, and breaks through every law;
But he whose soul on honest truth relies,
Nor meanly flatters power, nor madly flies.
Thus timid authors bear an abject mind,
And plead for mercy they but seldom find.
Some, as the desperate, to the halter run,
Boldly deride the fate they cannot shun;
But such there are, whose minds, not taught to stoop,
Yet hope for fame, and dare avow their hope,
Who neither brave the judges of their cause,
Nor beg in soothing strains a brief applause.
And such I 'd be;—and ere my fate is past,
Ere clear'd with honour, or with culprits cast,
Humbly at Learning's bar I 'll state my case,
And welcome then distinction or disgrace!

When in the man the flights of fancy reign,
Rule in the heart, or revel in the brain,
As busy Thought her wild creation apes,
And hangs delighted o'er her varying shapes,
It asks a judgment, weighty and discreet,
To know where wisdom prompts, and where conceit;
Alike their draughts to every scribbler's mind
(Blind to their faults as to their danger blind);—
We write enraptured, and we write in haste,
Dream idle dreams, and call them things of taste,
Improvement trace in every paltry line,
And see, transported, every dull design;
Are seldom cautious, all advice detest,
And ever think our own opinions best;
Nor shows my Muse a muse-like spirit here,
Who bids me pause, before I persevere.

But she—who shrinks while meditating flight
In the wide way, whose bounds delude her sight,
Yet tired in her own mazes still to roam,
And cull poor banquets for the soul at home,
Would, ere she ventures, ponder on the way,
Lest dangers yet unthought-of flight betray;
Lest her Icarian wing, by wits unplumed,
Be robb'd of all the honours she assumed;
And Dulness swell,—a black and dismal sea,
Gaping her grave; while censures madden me.

Such was his fate, who flew too near the sun,
Shot far beyond his strength, and was undone;
Such is his fate, who creeping at the shore
The billow sweeps him, and he 's found no more.
Oh! for some God, to bear my fortunes fair
Midway betwixt presumption and despair!

"Has then some friendly critic's former blow
"Taught thee a prudence authors seldom know?"

Not so! their anger and their love untried,
A woe-taught prudence deigns to tend my side:
Life's hopes ill-sped, the Muse's hopes grow poor,
And though they flatter, yet they charm no more
Experience points where lurking dangers lay,
And as I run, throws caution in my way.

There was a night, when wintry winds did rage,
Hard by a ruin'd pile, I meet a sage;
Resembling him the time-struck place appear'd,
Hollow its voice, and moss its spreading beard;

Whose fate-lopp'd brow, the bat's and beetle's dome,
Shook, as the hunted owl flew hooting home.
His breast was bronzed by many an eastern blast,
And fourscore winters seem'd he to have past;
His thread-bare coat the supple osier bound,
And with slow feet he press'd the sodden ground,
Where, as he heard the wild-wing'd Eurus blow,
He shook, from locks as white, December's snow;
Inured to storm, his soul ne'er bid it cease,
But lock'd within him meditated peace.

Father, I said—for silver hairs inspire,
And oft I call the bending peasant Sire—
Tell me, as here beneath this ivy bower,
That works fantastic round its trembling tower,
We hear Heaven's guilt-alarming thunders roar,
Tell me the pains and pleasures of the poor;
For Hope, just spent, requires a sad adieu,
And Fear acquaints me I shall live with you.

There was a time when, by Delusion led,
A scene of sacred bliss around me spread,
On Hope's, as Pisgah's lofty top, I stood,
And saw my Canaan there, my promised good;
A thousand scenes of joy the clime bestow'd,
And wine and oil through vision's valleys flow'd;
As Moses his, I call'd my prospect bless'd,
And gazed upon the good I ne'er possess'd:
On this side Jordan doom'd by fate to stand,
Whilst happier Joshuas win the promised land.
"Son," said the Sage—"be this thy care suppress'd;
"The state the Gods shall choose thee is the best:
"Rich if thou art, they ask thy praises more,
"And would thy patience when they make thee poor;
"But other thoughts within thy bosom reign,
"And other subjects vex thy busy brain,
"Poetic wreaths thy vainer dreams excite,
"And thy sad stars have destined thee to write.
"Then since that task the ruthless fates decree,
"Take a few precepts from the Gods and me!

"Be not too eager in the arduous chace;
"Who pants for triumph seldom wins the race:
"Venture not all, but wisely hoard thy worth,
"And let thy labours one by one go forth:
"Some happier scrap capricious wits may find
"On a fair day, and be profusely kind;
"Which, buried in the rubbish of a throng,
"Had pleased as little as a new-year's song,
"Or lover's verse, that cloy'd with nauseous sweet,
"Or birth-day ode, that ran on ill-pair'd feet.
"Merit not always—Fortune feeds the bard,
"And as the whim inclines bestows reward:
"None without wit, nor with it numbers gain;
"To please is hard, but none shall please in vain:
"As a coy mistress is the humour'd town,
"Loth every lover with success to crown;
"He who would win must every effort try,
"Sail in the mode, and to the fashion fly;
"Must gay or grave to every humour dress,
"And watch the lucky Moment of Success;
"That caught, no more his eager hopes are crost;
"But vain are Wit and Love, when that is lost."

Thus said the God; for now a God he grew,
His white locks changing to a golden hue,
And from his shoulders hung a mantle azur blue.
His softening eyes the winning charm disclosed
Of dove-like Delia when her doubts reposed;
Mira's alone a softer lustre bear,
When woe beguiles them of an angel's tear;
Beauteous and young the smiling phantom stood,
Then sought on airy wing his blest abode.

Ah! truth, distasteful in poetic theme,
Why is the Muse compell'd to own her dream?
Whilst forward wits had sworn to every line,
I only wish to make its moral mine.

Say then, O ye who tell how authors speed,
May Hope indulge her flight, and I succeed?
Say, shall my name, to future song prefixed,
Be with the meanest of the tuneful mix'd?
Shall my soft strains the modest maid engage,
My graver numbers move the silver'd sage,
My tender themes delight the lover's heart,
And comfort to the poor my solemn songs impart?

For Oh! thou Hope's, thou Thought's, eternal King,
Who gav'st them power to charm, and me to sing—
Chief to thy praise my willing numbers soar,
And in my happier transports I adore;
Mercy! thy softest attribute proclaim,
Thyself in abstract, thy more lovely name;
That flings o'er all my grief a cheering ray,
As the full moon-beam gilds the watery way.
And then too, Love, my soul's resistless lord,
Shall many a gentle, generous strain afford,
To all the soil of sooty passions blind,
Pure as embracing angels and as kind;
Our Mira's name in future times shall shine,
And—though the harshest—Shepherds envy mine.

Then let me, (pleasing task!) however hard,
Join, as of old, the prophet and the bard;
If not, ah! shield me from the dire disgrace,
That haunts the wild and visionary race;
Let me not draw my lengthen'd lines along,
And tire in untamed infamy of song,
Lest, in some dismal Dunciad's future page,
I stand the Cibber of this tuneless age;
Lest, if another Pope th' indulgent skies
Should give, inspired by all their deities,
My luckless name, in his immortal strain,
Should, blasted, brand me as a second Cain;
Doom'd in that song to live against my will,
Whom all must scorn, and yet whom none could kill.

The youth, resisted by the maiden's art,
Persists, and *time* subdues her kindling heart;
To strong entreaty yields the widow's vow,
As mighty walls to bold besiegers bow;
Repeated prayers draw bounty from the sky,
And heaven is won by importunity;
Ours, a projecting tribe, pursue in vain,
In tedious trials, an uncertain gain;
Madly plunge on through every hope's defeat,
And with our ruin only find the *cheat*.

"And why then seek that luckless doom to share?"
Who, I?—To shun it is my only care.

I grant it true, that others better tell
Of mighty WOLFE, who conquer'd as he fell;[2]
Of heroes born, their threaten'd realms to save,
Whom Fame anoints, and Envy tends whose grave;
Of crimson'd fields, where Fate, in dire array,
Gives to the breathless the short-breathing clay;
Ours, a young train, by humbler fountains dream,
Nor taste presumptuous the Pierian stream;
When Rodney's triumph comes on eagle-wing,
We hail the victor whom we fear to sing;
Nor tell we how each hostile chief goes on,
The luckless Lee, or wary Washington;
How Spanish bombast blusters—they were beat,
And French politeness dulcifies—defeat.
My modest Muse forbears to speak of kings,
Lest fainting stanzas blast the name she sings;
For who—the tenant of the beechen shade,
Dares the big thought in regal breasts pervade?
Or search his soul, whom each too-favouring God
Gives to delight in plunder, pomp, and blood?
No; let me free from Cupid's frolic round,
Rejoice, or more rejoice by Cupid bound;
Of laughing girls in smiling couplets tell,
And paint the dark-brow'd grove, where wood-nymphs dwell;
Who bid invading youths their vengeance feel,
And pierce the votive hearts they mean to heal.
Such were the themes I knew in school-day ease,
When first the moral magic learn'd to please,
Ere Judgment told how transports warm'd the breast,
Transported Fancy there her stores imprest;
The soul in varied raptures learn'd to fly,
Felt all their force, and never question'd why;
No idle doubts could then her peace molest,
She found delight, and left to heaven the rest;
Soft joys in Evening's placid shades were born;
And where sweet fragrance wing'd the balmy morn,
When the wild thought roved vision's circuit o'er,
And caught the raptures, caught, alas! no more:
No care did then a dull attention ask,
For study pleased, and that was every task;
No guilty dreams stalk'd that heaven-favour'd round,
Heaven-guarded, too, no Envy entrance found;
Nor numerous wants, that vex advancing age,
Nor Flattery's silver tale, nor Sorrow's sage;
Frugal Affliction kept each growing dart,
T' o'erwhelm in future days the bleeding heart.
No sceptic art veil'd Pride in Truth's disguise,
But prayer unsoil'd of doubt besieged the skies;
Ambition, avarice, care, to man retired,
Nor came desires more quick than joys desired.

A summer morn there was, and passing fair,
Still was the breeze, and health perfumed the air;
The glowing east in crimson'd splendour shone,
What time the eye just marks the pallid moon,
Vi'let-wing'd Zephyr fann'd each opening flower,
And brush'd from fragrant cups the limpid shower;
A distant huntsman fill'd his cheerful horn,
The vivid dew hung trembling on the thorn,
And mists, like creeping rocks, arose to meet the morn.
Huge giant shadows spread along the plain,
Or shot from towering rocks o'er half the main,
There to the slumbering bark the gentle tide
Stole soft, and faintly beat against its side;
Such is that sound, which fond designs convey,
When, true to love, the damsel speeds away;
The sails unshaken, hung aloft unfurl'd,
And simpering nigh, the languid current curl'd;
A crumbling ruin, once a city's pride,
The well-pleased eye through withering oaks descried,
Where Sadness, gazing on time's ravage, hung,
And Silence to Destruction's trophy clung—
Save that as morning songsters swell'd their lays,
Awaken'd Echo humm'd repeated praise:
The lark on quavering pinion woo'd the day,
Less towering linnets fill'd the vocal spray,
And song-invited pilgrims rose to pray.
Here at a pine-press'd hill's embroider'd base
I stood, and hail'd the Genius of the place.
Then was it doom'd by fate, my idle heart,
Soften'd by Nature, gave access to Art;
The Muse approach'd, her syren-song I heard,
Her magic felt, and all her charms revered:
E'er since she rules in absolute control,
And Mira only dearer to my soul.
Ah! tell me not these empty joys to fly,
If they deceive, I would deluded die;
To the fond themes my heart so early wed,
So soon in life to blooming visions led,
So prone to run the vague uncertain course,
'T is more than death to think of a divorce.

What wills the poet of the favouring gods,
Led to their shrine, and blest in their abodes?[3]
What when he fills the glass, and to each youth
Names his loved maid, and glories in his truth?
Not India's spoils, the splendid nabob's pride,
Not the full trade of Hermes' own Cheapside,
Nor gold itself, nor all the Ganges laves,
Or shrouds, well shrouded in his sacred waves;
Nor gorgeous vessels deck'd in trim array,
Which the more noble Thames bears far away;
Let those whose nod makes sooty subjects flee,
Hack with blunt steel the savory callipee;
Let those whose ill-used wealth their country fly,
Virtue-scorn'd wines from hostile France to buy;
Favour'd by Fate, let such in joy appear,
Their smuggled cargoes landed thrice a year;
Disdaining these, for simpler food I 'll look,
And crop my beverage at the mantled brook.

O Virtue! brighter than the noon-tide ray,
My humble prayers with sacred joys repay!
Health to my limbs may the kind Gods impart,
And thy fair form delight my yielding heart!

[2] IMIT.—Scriberis Vario fortis, et hostium
Victor, Mæonii carminis alite,
Quam rem cumque ferox navibus, aut equis
Miles, te duce, gesserit, &c. &c.
HOR. Lib. i. Od. 8.

[3] IMIT.—Quid dedicatum poscit Apollinem
Vates? quid orat, de patera novum
Fundens liquorem? &c. &c.
HOR. *Carm.* XXXI. lib. i.

Grant me to shun each vile inglorious road,
To see thy way, and trace each moral good:
If more—let Wisdom's sons my page peruse,
And decent credit deck my modest Muse.

Nor deem it pride that prophesies my song
Shall please the sons of taste, and please them long.
Say ye! to whom my Muse submissive brings
Her first-fruit offering, and on trembling wings,
May she not hope in future days to soar,
Where fancy's sons have led the way before?
Where genius strives in each ambrosial bower
To snatch with agile hand the opening flower?
To cull what sweets adorn the mountain's brow,
What humbler blossoms crown the vales below?
To blend with these the stores by art refined,
And give the moral Flora to the mind?

Far other scenes my timid hour admits,
Relentless critics and avenging wits;
E'en coxcombs take a licence from their pen,
And to each "Let him perish," cry Amen!
And thus, with wits or fools my heart shall cry,
For if they please not, let the trifles die:
Die, and be lost in dark oblivion's shore,
And never rise to vex their author more.

I would not dream o'er some soft liquid line,
Amid a thousand blunders form'd to shine;
Yet rather this, than that dull scribbler be,
From every fault and every beauty free,
Curst with tame thoughts and mediocrity.
Some have I found so thick beset with spots,
'T was hard to trace their beauties through their blots;
And these, as tapers round a sick man's room,
Or passing chimes, but warn'd me of the tomb!

O! if you blast, at once consume my bays,
And damn me not with mutilated praise.
With candour judge; and, a young bard in view,
Allow for that, and judge with kindness too;
Faults he must own, though hard for him to find,
Not to some happier merits quite so blind;
These if mistaken Fancy only sees,
Or Hope, that takes Deformity for these:
If Dunce, the crowd-befitting title falls
His lot, and Dulness her new subject calls,—
To the poor bard alone your censures give—
Let his fame die, but let his honour live;
Laugh if you must—be candid as you can,
And when you lash the Poet, spare the Man.

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